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# THE LITTLE GIPSY.

By ÉLIE SAUVAGE,

AUTHOR OF "MIRETTE," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY LORENZ FRÖLICH.

Translated by Anna Blackwell.



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TO MY LITTLE FRIEND

EDMA FRÖLICH.

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DEAR CHILD,

This book having been written for you, it is but fair that it should be dedicated to you. I know not what may be its destiny. If it be not speedily swallowed up in the devouring gulf of oblivion, it will only have escaped that danger through the charming pictures with which it has been embellished by your excellent father. The pencil of the true artist is a fairy-wand that changes lead into gold, and pebbles into diamonds. But, whatever be its fate, this little tale will live in your remembrance as a memento of your happy early days. By the time you have grown up to be a tall, handsome young lady, I shall most likely have finished my earthly pilgrimage; but the sight of this little book will carry your thoughts back lovingly to the past, evoking the fair phantoms of your love-encircled

childhood. It will be to you like a cluster of withered flowers, forgotten in some corner of desk or drawer, but which, when found again after the lapse of years, fills the heart with the tender fragrance of vanished joys.

Your old Friend,

ÉLIE SAUVAGE.

It is just as well that the reader should know that my little friend Edma Frölich has served as the model of her father's most bewitching creations. She is the heroine of the celebrated "*Lili's Day*," of "*Baby at the Sea-side*," of "*Baby at Home*," and of nearly all the other charming albums which, under the title of "*Library of Mademoiselle Lili*," have rendered Messrs. Stahl and Frölich so popular in the pleasant world of mammas and little people.

E. S.

#### Note by the Translator.

It may not be uninteresting to the English reader to state that "The Little Gipsy" has obtained a wide popularity in France. M. Duruy, the present enlightened and energetic Minister of Public Instruction, has not only testified his approval by distributing two hundred copies of the book as prizes among the laureates of the University Schools, but has requested the Author to inform him of the publication of future works from his pen, for the purpose of using them in a similar manner.

The Municipality of Paris has distributed a still larger number of copies as prizes among the pupils of the Communal Schools of the Department of the Seine.

A. B.



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# THE LITTLE GIPSY.

## CHAPTER I.

MINNA'S INFANCY.—HER PRECOCIOUS TALENTS ARE THE  
ADMIRATION OF HER PARENTS AND NEIGHBOURS.

IN a little village, hidden like a nest, in a fair valley of the Tyrol, there lived, some hundred years ago, a worthy tailor, Carl Hoffmann by name; an honest, simple-minded man, loving God, and loving his fellow-creatures. He was so industrious that, although he had no other fortune than his needle, not only did his family never lack bread, but he was even able to give a little help, from time to time, to those who were still poorer than himself; thanks to two good Genii who dwelt at his hearth, and helped him in his work, and of whom one was named "Industry," and the other "Economy." This worthy man had a wife whose name was Gretchen. Tidy, active, hardworking, always ready to do a kind turn, Gretchen was like a piece of dough made of the very best flour, but into which, as Carl used jokingly to say, the baker had unfortu-

nately put rather too much yeast. It is quite true that



Gretchen carried her heart in her hand; but it is also true that her imagination often ran away with her judgment. She

was always longing for riches, and fine clothes, and amusements, and bustle; and grieving, with her foolish complainings, her good husband, whose ambition never soared above the barrier of mountains that hemmed in his native village.

Except for these little weaknesses, Gretchen was the best creature in the world; and when her head was not running on these useless fancies, she was so merry, so full of kindness and affection for all about her, that no one could be angry with her long together.

This good couple had a little daughter, as beautiful as a fairy, and as lively and clever as Puck himself. Little Minna was the joy and consolation of Carl, the pride of Gretchen's heart, and the delight of the whole village for her childish grace and her pretty ways. Before she was three years old, she was always singing little songs, of which she composed both the words and the airs. But dancing was her great delight and triumph. Waking, every morning, with the birds and the sun, she would slip out of her cot, and dance up and down the room in her night-gown, gliding about on the points of her little bare toes, with such a comical display of airs and graces, and such intense pleasure in the movements she invented, that Carl and Gretchen would forget their work to watch her; and the neighbours, as they passed the tailor's cottage on their way to their work, would stop to look in at the window, admiring the pretty little creature, and lavishing on her the most complimentary adjectives of their rustic vocabulary.

## CHAPTER II.

### SHOWING WHAT WAS MINNA'S FAVOURITE BALLAD.

THOSE who follow a sedentary trade, which occupies the body more than the mind, such as weavers, sempstresses, tailors, and so on, are generally fond of singing songs and telling stories. This taste was very strong in Carl, whose frank and expansive nature thus found a sympathetic outlet. But he was like the nightingale, that only warbles her melodious cadences in the peaceful stillness of quiet summer evenings, and hides herself under the leaves whenever a storm is coming on. And so the neighbours—for whom, as is well known, all houses are made of glass, and who always know all about one's affairs, no matter how cleverly one tries to hide them—used to say, when they heard the tailor singing at his work, "Papa Hoffmann is airing his songs to-day; then Gretchen is in good humour!"

Carl's collection of vocal treasures comprised a certain ballad, "The Milk-white Kid," which was Minna's especial and supreme delight. This ballad was certainly not a masterpiece of poetic art; the simplicity of its theme, and the poverty of its rhymes, would no doubt have brought a disdainful smile to the lips of a Court-laureate, or a critic of Academic renown; yet it was, nevertheless, one of those



unpretending ditties that may find favour with unsophisticated persons who do not despise the humble floweret because it grows on a modest bush. But here it is; so my little readers may judge of its merits for themselves.

## THE MILK-WHITE KID.



HOP ! jump ! and play—old tricks and new,  
Joliette ;

And love me ever as I love you,  
My pretty pet !



Sole inheritance and joy  
Of the little Shepherd-boy,—  
His milk-white Kid, his pretty pet,  
Joliette,—  
How merrily they play'd together,  
In the pleasant summer weather !

Hop ! jump ! and play, &c.



At his bidding she would dance,  
Leap, and run, and frisk, and prance !

His milk-white Kid, his pretty pet,  
Joliette,  
From his hand fresh grass would eat,  
Or sleep contented at his feet.

Hop ! jump ! and play, &c.



All the Shepherds, far and near,  
Envied him his playmate dear.—  
“Wilt thou sell thy milk-white pet,  
Joliette,  
For this purse of shining gold?”—  
“What one loves may *not* be sold !”

Hop ! jump ! and play, &c.

At length, alas ! she stray'd away ;—  
Weeping, he sought her, every day,—  
His milk-white Kid, his pretty pet,  
Joliette ;—

Then back, at dusk, to his hut would creep,  
And lie and sob himself to sleep.

Hop ! jump ! and play, &c.



“Nay, little Shepherd, do not cry !  
She’s *sure* to come home again, by and by,  
Your milk-white Kid, your pretty pet,  
Joliette ;—  
And when you see the runaway,  
Again you’ll frolic, race, and play !”

Hop ! jump ! and play, &c.

Butting, *pum, pum*, against the door—  
Trotting, *pit, pat*, across the floor—  
His milk-white Kid, his pretty pet,  
Joliette,  
Came back one night ! you well may think  
For joy he could not sleep a wink !



“Don’t go again to the wood alone,  
Lest the wolf leave of *you* only skin and bone,  
My milk-white Kid, my pretty pet,  
Joliette ;  
But hop ! jump ! play—old tricks and new !  
And love me ever as I love you,  
Joliette !”



Not a day ever passed that Minna did not say, holding up her pretty little head, with its flaxen ringlets, "Papa! sing 'The Milk-white Kid'!" Carl could never resist his daughter's coaxings, and he would sing the desired ballad without her having to ask twice. Minna would listen, motionless, attentive, her interest increasing with each successive stanza; but whenever Carl came to the chorus, "Hop! jump! and play—" she would dart away with the speed of an arrow, spinning and turning with such well-measured movements, and attitudes at once so pretty and so funny, that she filled the good tailor's heart with mirth and sunshine for the rest of the day. Little, alas! did the poor man dream that the history of the Shepherd-boy was soon to be his own! so true is it that what one day makes us laugh, often makes us weep on the morrow!



### CHAPTER III.

PAPA HOFFMANN DOES NOT NEGLECT MINNA'S MORAL  
TRAINING.



THOUGH Carl delighted in all this singing and dancing, he yet, like a sensible man, looked upon these merely as pleasant

pastimes that should not be allowed to interfere with the more serious business of life, which he rightly considered to be the moral and religious education of the little creature whom Providence had committed to his care. He had taught Minna a little prayer which she repeated every morning and evening ; on Sundays he took her to church ; and when they got home again he used to take her on his knee, telling her beautiful stories out of the Old and New Testaments, and showing her the pictures in the large family Bible, which he explained to her with the same good sense and right feeling that marked all his words and actions. Minna always listened gravely and attentively to her father's teachings ; it was good seed sown in good ground.





## CHAPTER IV.

HOW MINNA CAME NEAR BEING BEATEN FOR EATING AN  
APPLE.

CARL HOFFMANN was blessed with a sweet and even temper,



that was only once known to be ruffled in the whole course of his life. The occasion of this ruffling was as follows:—

Opposite Carl's cottage was a poor cabin, in which there dwelt an old woman called Mother Fritz. God had sent her heavy trials: He had taken away her poor husband and her two sons in the same year. It is very sad to be left all alone in the world; especially when one has no other means of support than the labour of a pair of arms already stiffened with age. In winter Mother Fritz picked up dry wood in the forest, to make her a fire and to cook her slender meals; in summer she gleaned in the furrows after the corn had been reaped; and when bad weather kept her in-doors, she sat at her wheel, and spun thread for the weavers. But these occupations would not have enabled her to keep body and soul together if Providence had not given her good neighbours, all of whom were very kind to her, especially Father Hoffmann, who loved and esteemed her for her courage and resignation. Mother Fritz's cabin stood in a little tiny garden, surrounded by a quickset hedge; in the middle of this garden, among a few carrots and cabbages and half a dozen scrubby gooseberry-bushes, there rose majestically a magnificent apple-tree, whose boughs were bending under the weight of the fruit. Minna used to stand at her father's window, and look out at the beautiful apples, until the poor old woman's garden seemed to her to be an earthly Paradise; but one which she no more dared to approach than she would have done had there been a real Angel keeping watch at the gate with a fiery sword in his hand. However, one day, when her father had gone to the other end of the village,

▼

to take home a coat to a customer, while her mother was busy cooking the dinner, Minna could not resist the temptation to pay a visit to Mother Fritz's garden. She had not the least thought of touching the beautiful apples; she only wished to see them a little nearer. So she stole across the road, opened the gate very softly, and found herself face to face with the wonderful apple-tree. She stood still for a moment, quite bewildered by the sight.

"Oh! what a many apples!" said Minna to herself, and going up a little closer to the tree. One beautiful apple, especially, attracted her attention; plump, round, and rosy, it seemed to smile on her as it hung, temptingly, from the end of a branch that drooped almost to the ground. Minna thought she would just touch it; she stretched out her hand, and the beautiful apple fell into it, as it seemed to her, of its own accord. What was to be done? Divided between fear and longing, she turned it round and round; both sides were so pretty! She smelt it; the perfume was delicious! From nose to mouth the road is not long; a moment more, and this young daughter of our Mother Eve was devouring the apple as fast as her little teeth could bite it, when, all of a sudden, she heard a terrible voice, just behind her, saying,—

"What are you doing here?"

"I am doing nothing, papa!" replied Minna, in a dreadful fright.

"You are telling a lie, little thief!" said her father, sternly, as he took from her hand the remains of the apple, which

she was trying to hide. Minna could no longer deny what she had done; and she felt so much ashamed that she would have given all her toys not to have touched the apple.

"To steal from any one is very wicked indeed," said her father; "but to steal from the poor is doubly wicked!"

"I will never do it again, papa! I will never do it again!" exclaimed Minna, clasping her hands and beginning to cry. Carl took her by the waist, held her against his knee, and was just on the point of administering to her, for the first time in her life, a sort of punishment well known to little people who have been naughty, when Mother Fritz appeared in the garden.

"Nay, Hoffmann," said the old woman, "pray don't beat the dear little thing!"

"But I have just caught her eating your apples!" returned the tailor.

"Well, well, she is very welcome to them," said Mother Fritz; "it is true that she ought not to have taken them without leave, but I am sure she is sorry, and will never do so again."

"Oh no, indeed, Mother Fritz; never, never!" cried Minna, whose tears were flowing very fast.

"You see, neighbour," said the widow, "she is sorry for what she has done; and I should be really grieved if she were punished any more."

"Well, kneel down, then, and beg Mother Fritz's pardon,"

said her father, still looking very stern, but delighted, nevertheless, at the bottom of his heart, to be spared the necessity of inflicting so humiliating a punishment on his little darling.

"Mo-ther Fritz, I beg you-r par-don!" sobbed Minna, going down on her knees to the kind-hearted old woman.

"And I forgive you, dear, with all my heart," replied Mother Fritz, lifting her up, and kissing her. "But tell me, were my apples really very good, after all?" she continued, with a smile.

"Oh, yes! very good, Mother Fritz, very good indeed!" replied Minna, in a tone of profound conviction.

"Well, I'll give you some more when they are quite ripe!" said Mother Fritz.

Carl slipped a kreutzer into the old woman's hand, but she would not accept it, although he pressed her to do so.

"Would you wish to humble a poor soul to whom you have done so many kindnesses?" exclaimed Mother Fritz, rather hurt by his insistence.

Carl understood and appreciated Mother Fritz's reluctance; he put the coin back into his pocket, thanked her very cordially, and went home, taking Minna with him.



## CHAPTER V.

SHOWING HOW MINNA'S PRETTY WAYS MADE GRETCHEN  
PROUD.



THE little scene narrated in the last chapter was a great event in Minna's life, and had the effect of making her rather more thoughtful. Instead of being sulky at the remembrance of her

father's anger, as is sometimes the case with ill-natured children, she seemed to love and respect him more than ever. As for Gretchen, time did not seem to render her more reasonable, but rather the reverse. She thought nothing too good, nothing too dear, for her little girl. On Sundays, when she took her to church, after spending a couple of hours in combing out her long silky curls, and dressing her up as fine as any little lady, she could not refrain from saying disagreeable things about the other children of the village.

According to her, this one was in rags, and that one's clothes were tasteless and clumsy; this child had carrotty hair or a red nose, and that one had crooked legs or an ugly mouth; whereas her Minna was a perfect little beauty, and it was heart-breaking to think that she must remain buried all her life, in a dull, out-of-the-way village!

It grieved Carl much to hear his wife go on in this nonsensical fashion; and he would often shake his head, and say, as though moved by a painful presentiment, "Gretchen, Gretchen, you are too much puffed up! God will punish us!"



## CHAPTER VI.

### A WONDERFUL ARRIVAL.—AN OLD GIPSY PREDICTS A BRILLIANT DESTINY FOR MINNA.

ONE day a troop of gipsies made its appearance in the village. They had come from Italy, and were passing through the Tyrol on their way to Silesia, where the gipsies are in the habit of assembling, in great numbers, every seventh year, at Whitsuntide, under the command of their King. The troop consisted of a score or so of persons,—men, women, and children. An old man, very tall, and carrying a long crook like a bishop's crozier, towered above the rest of the group like a giant oak amidst the lesser trees of the forest. This old man was Rabba, the chief of the band. He might have been taken for a venerable patriarch of the olden time, had it not been for certain lines about his eyes, and round his lower lip, which betrayed a sly and bantering humour. On his right was a tall, energetic-looking fellow, strongly built, round-shouldered, with coarse, curly hair, whose long, pointed fingers, half-shut eyes, and restless glance, indicated the professional thief; while his red and muddled complexion



showed him to be animated by violent passions which might easily convert the robber into a murderer.

Behind this agreeable-looking personage came a man about forty years old, whose open and intelligent countenance offered as strong a contrast to the rest of the troop as a white patch on a black coat. For Petrolino was not a gipsy by birth. A native of beautiful Venice, he had quitted the City of Lagoons at the age of fifteen; partly from a longing for independence and adventure, but still more to escape from the tyranny of his father, the gondolier, a brutal and miserly man, who bestowed on his son a good many more thumps than sugar-plums. A mandoline, slung over his shoulder, showed that Petrolino was the musician of the troop.

Of the women, some were old, and some were young; some carried babies on their backs, while others were leading bigger children by the hand. One very old woman was so ugly that you could not have helped noticing her; her nose was hooked, like the beak of a bird of prey, and her black eyes, sunk deep in their sockets, seemed, at times, to throw out dark flames. There was, in her whole appearance and aspect, something sombre and implacable as Fate. Even her companions regarded her with superstitious terror. She was called Zara, the Witch; her trade was fortune-telling; and she was believed to surpass, in that mysterious art, all the women of her race. Her heart, dry and cold as that of a usurer, had no affection for any living creature except her grandson, Kokorik, a good-for-nothing young rogue,

about twelve years old, as crooked and ugly in body as in mind. It really seemed as though Zara loved her imp of a grandson for his ugliness and badness. Rabba had appointed this young Hopeful to lead the donkey that carried on its back the greater part of the miscellaneous belongings of the troop, and as these included kettles and frying-pans, and the other utensils of their nomadic existence, you may be sure that the load was any thing but a light one. The donkey having a tiresome way of stopping, every now and then, to take breath, or to eat a mouthful of grass, Kokorik had contrived to fit, into the end of his stick, a sharp iron spike, that he used to stick, at such times, into the flanks of the unfortunate beast, which would then go forward again, braying plaintively.

When the gipsies reached the green on which stands the village church, the chief signed to them to stop. The whole village had turned out to see the strangers. Minna, holding her mother's hand, looked at them with wonder not unmixed with fear. Petrolino, the man with the mandoline, struck a few chords on his instrument; and, presently, one of the women began to sing a strange, weird song, in a foreign tongue, the whole troop joining in at the chorus, while the gipsy-children leapt about in a kind of rude dance, uttering wild and discordant cries. Minna, electrified by this spectacle, let go her mother's hand, and began dancing about like the little gipsies. Petrolino happened to see her, and uttered an exclamation of surprise that caused Zara

to turn round. The sight of the lovely little creature put a diabolical idea all at once into the beldam's wicked old head. She walked straight up to Minna.

"Who is this beautiful child?" she inquired, in her most honeyed tones.

"She is my daughter," replied Gretchen, proudly.

"I see on her brow the signs of a high destiny. Give me two kreutzer, and I will tell her fortune," said the old woman.

Gretchen hastily drew a couple of kreutzer from her pocket, and gave them to the sorceress. The latter took Minna's hand in her own, and examined the little soft palm for some



time in silence; then, suddenly turning to her companions, she exclaimed,—

"She has a star on the Mount of Jupiter!"

These magic words, repeated from one to another among the troop, caused them all to gather closely round Zara, who thus continued:—

"Jupiter—the Sun—glory—fortune—an obstacle—overcome . . . ."

But just at that moment a man forced his way into the midst of the crowd. It was Carl Hoffmann, who, seizing Minna with one hand, and Gretchen with the other, drew them quickly out of the circle, saying, at the same time, in a tone of severity, "Come home directly!" Gretchen would fain have recounted to her husband all the fine things promised for their child, but Carl cut short her recital by saying,—

"God alone knows what is in the future, and He has His reasons for hiding it from us. The gipsies are miserable wretches, base and lawless, who live by thieving, and steal little children!"

"Let them not touch my Minna!" cried Gretchen, shuddering at these words, and pressing her little daughter to her bosom.

Neither Hoffmann nor his wife had noticed that one of the gipsies had left the troop, was following them home, just far enough from them to keep himself out of their sight, and did not go back to his comrades until he had taken exactly such a look at the tailor's cottage and its surroundings, as a hawk may be supposed to take at the bush in which a pretty white dove has taken refuge.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE GIPSIES HOLD A COUNCIL, AND TAKE A BOLD RESOLUTION.

MAKITOU had no sooner returned to the troop, and rendered an account of his mission, than Rabba gave the order to depart. The gipsies immediately resumed their march; nor did they pause until they reached a wood on the outskirts of the village. The Chief then inquired, like a careful father, into the state of the larder, and learned that it was absolutely empty.

“Do you want any supper, my children?” asked Rabba.

“We do!” replied the whole band, with admirable unanimity.

“Very good, my children; then go to market, while I and the Elders consult together upon matters not less important.—Kokorik,” continued the Chief, addressing Zara’s grandson, “I should amazingly relish a roast goose for my supper!”

“If I see one in the market, I will not fail to buy it for your Lordship!” replied that amiable youth, with an ugly grin.

The greater part of the troop—men, women, and children—

having hastily provided themselves with bags and baskets, from the stores on the donkey's back, went off at once on the errand assigned to them.

"Do you want any money, my children?" cried the Chief, jocosely, as he saw them depart.

To this agreeable pleasantry one of the women replied by singing,—

"Whate'er he finds upon his way,  
The skilful gipsy makes his prey!"

"And now," said Rabba, to those who remained with him, and whom he called "The Elders," that is to say, Petrolino, Makitou, and Zara, "take your places; the sitting is begun."

As he spoke, he seated himself majestically on a stone, his tall crook in his hand; and his councillors grouped themselves around him at a respectful distance.

"Is it your opinion," inquired Rabba, "that it would be for the good of our band to add to our number the young child in question?"

"Undoubtedly it is," replied Zara. "We are going to pass through many great towns, in which it would be dangerous to exercise the privileges of our order."

"It is true," interposed Rabba, sententiously, "that the police persists in its refusal to recognize their existence!"

"We shall therefore be reduced," resumed Zara, without taking any notice of this interruption, "to get our living by begging, by telling fortunes, and by getting up plays and exhibitions in the market-places. The youth of this

child, and her natural talents, which Petrolino will be able to develop, will, I am certain, interest the idiots among whom we shall find ourselves, and bring lots of silver coin into our pouches."

"It may be that Zara is right," replied Rabba, after a moment's silence; "the little girl has all the charms of her age,—beauty, grace, innocence;—qualities which, in our band, are especially conspicuous by their absence. For though our faces have plenty of character, we may confess, among ourselves, that they are usually considered to be deficient in charm, and possess, on the contrary, the not-very-flattering privilege of frightening dogs and children. So, then, it is decided that we adopt the little peasant-girl?"

"But if, as Zara declares, the little girl has a star, is it not doubtful whether she is destined to become one of us?" timidly objected Petrolino.

"How now, Signor Petrolino?" returned Rabba, with a frown, on hearing this somewhat uncomplimentary observation: "do you, then, consider yourself so very unfortunate in being with us?"

"Oh, no, my Lord; not so!" replied Petrolino, hurriedly: "you have quite mistaken my meaning."

"I repeat what I have said," resumed Zara; "the child has a destiny. The stars promise her glory, happiness, fortune; but she has first to pass through terrible trials."

"That alters the case," said Petrolino. "But by what means are we to obtain possession of the little girl?"

"Oh, that's easily managed," said Makitou, now speaking for the first time. "The tailor's house stands by itself. In the dead of the night we break open the door, gag the father and mother, and take the bird out of the nest."

"A row! violence! that will never do!" cried the Chief;



"you know, Makitou, that my principle is to pluck a goose without making it cackle!"



"My way," retorted Makitou, "is to wring its neck first, and to pluck it afterwards."

"You'll come to a bad end, Makitou!" replied Rabba, shaking his head.

"He'll be hung," said Zara, "'tis written in his hand!"

"Hold thy tongue, witch!" cried Makitou, angrily, "the rope that will hang me is not yet spun!"

"I see the hemp being sown that will serve thy hangman!" muttered Zara, in a sinister tone.

Makitou shivered from head to foot.

"Silence, Zara!" interposed the Chief, sternly: "if Makitou is to be hung, he will know it soon enough."

Petrolino, who during this altercation, had remained plunged in thought, now suddenly exclaimed,—

"I have it! Leave it all to me; and the little lark will come, of its own accord, into our nets!"

"Petrolino, my son," said Rabba, "if thou succeedest, I will give thee my beautiful red mantle, borrowed by me, twenty years ago, of a Senator of thy native city!"

"My Lord, the mantle is mine!" joyously returned Petrolino, wrapping himself already, in imagination, in the majestic folds of the ample scarlet cloak, which had been, for ten years, the object of his dreams.

"Ha, ha! here are our caterers, come home from market!" exclaimed Rabba, making a sudden end of the conclave, and going to meet the returning marauders.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT THE GIPSIES BROUGHT BACK FROM MARKET.



THE women came first: one carried a sack filled with apples; another, an enormous loaf of rye bread; a third was laden with fowls and ducks. Then came the men, one of whom had a small keg of cider on his back, while another carried a cheese under his coat. Kokorik trotted on proudly, at the head

of his little companions, a stout stick over his shoulder, and, dangling from the end of this stick, a goose whose size and plumpness drew from Rabba a cry of admiration. He gave Kokorik's ear a violent pinch, which, as it was a sign of the highest approbation on his part, seemed to afford great satisfaction to that young gentleman.

"My children," said the Chief, addressing the robbers, "I am well pleased with you. Come into the wood, that we may hide these glorious trophies from profane eyes. Pack them on the back of our faithful Rustaud<sup>1</sup>"—the name they gave to the ass—"and then, if you will, rest yourselves awhile; but be up, and ready to start, at the first signal. I warn you that it will be late, to-night, before we sup; for we shall have to give free play to our legs, before we can venture to sit down to a banquet!"

<sup>1</sup> Clodhopper.



## CHAPTER IX.

### HOW MINNA FALLS INTO THE TRAP LAID FOR HER BY PETROLINO.

DURING this time, Petrolino had completed his plan of operations. He quitted the troop, accompanied by Zara and Makitou, whom he posted on the edge of a wood, just beyond the tailor's dwelling, with minute instructions as to what they were to do. He then hid himself behind a hedge in front of the cottage, in order to watch the enemy's movements. Petrolino was by no means a bad fellow; the progress of this story will show that he was not destitute of noble qualities; and yet he was going to commit, without any hesitation, a most abominable crime. Strange to say, he would have blushed to steal a pin from the tailor, and yet he did not scruple to rob him of his most precious treasure, dearer to him than life, to plunge two poor people into despair, and to throw an innocent little creature into the midst of a horde of thieves and ruffians; so true is it that bad company never fails to deprave the very best nature.

Petrolino had remained at his post for two whole hours, and still the tailor could be seen busily plying his needle by the window, without ever raising his eyes from his work. When the sun went down behind the mountain, he lighted a lamp, and went on with his stitching with as much diligence as ever. Minna was seated near him, on a little chair, looking at the pictures in the old family Bible; and Gretchen went



backwards and forwards, busy with her household work. Petrolino was just beginning to lose heart, when the door opened, and the tailor came out with a bundle under his arm, talking to Gretchen. The good man was saying that she had better not leave the house, and must take the greatest care of Minna. But no sooner was her husband gone than

Gretchen told Minna to be a good girl, and not stir from the house, while she went to the baker's to fetch bread for supper. The truth is that she was longing to get out, and tell the neighbours of the grand things that the old gipsy-wife had foretold for Minna. However, on leaving the house, she took the precaution of locking the door.

No sooner was she gone, than Petrolino, who had watched all her movements, crept out of the hedge, stole softly up to the cottage, and peeped in at the window. Minna was still as deeply absorbed as ever, poring over the pictures in the old Bible. Petrolino now struck a few notes on his mandoline; and Minna at once raised her little head in astonishment, and looked through the window. Petrolino then retired a few steps, playing, meanwhile, one of his prettiest tunes. Minna



opened the window, listening with delighted ears; but presently the bewitching sounds began to grow fainter and fainter, as the

wily tempter receded farther and farther from the cottage. Forgetting all that her father and mother had said to her, she climbed out of the window, and followed the invisible music, which continued to recede as she advanced. She wandered on, and on, attracted, fascinated ; getting every moment farther and farther from her home. All at once, the music that had lured her onward ceased to play ; dark, shadow-like figures seemed to spring out upon the terrified child from under the trees ; and the poor little creature was seized, gagged, and carried off, before she had time to utter a single cry.



## CHAPTER X.

### THE WHOLE VILLAGE TURNS OUT TO RESCUE MINNA.

TIME passes quickly when one has a witch's predictions to repeat to a circle of eager listeners. There seems to be no end to the variations suggested by so rich a theme. And thus a whole hour had slipped away before Gretchen set out to return home.

"If only I were sure that Carl is still out!" she said to herself, quickening her pace.

On reaching the cottage, she was greatly astonished to find the window wide open. She unlocked the door, and looked in; but no Minna was to be seen. She called her, but there was no reply.

Just at that moment Carl came back.

"Where is Minna?" he inquired.

"I don't know," replied Gretchen, feeling as though she were losing her senses.

"Have you been out?" he asked, in sudden terror.

"Only just for an instant, to fetch some bread," replied Gretchen.



"Misery! misery! misery!" cried Carl, in an agony of despair, "what I feared has come to pass!"

"She must be at some of the neighbours!" cried the self-convicted mother, unable, in her anguish, to admit the horrible truth.

Carl seized on this suggestion as a drowning man seizes a rotten plank. Gretchen and he ran from house to house, inquiring after their missing child. But no one, alas! had seen any thing of poor little Minna.

In a few minutes, the whole village had heard the dreadful news. All the people had come out of their cottages; every body was talking at once, and asking questions that no one was able to answer.

"It is those vile gipsies that have carried her off!" said one.

"They have robbed my orchard!" said another.

"And my hen-roost!" said a third.

"My dear little Minna, my poor little spotless lamb, shall I then see you no more?" cried Carl, raising his eyes to Heaven, as though he would have called on the Angels to help him find his child.

As for Gretchen, motionless, her head bent down, her eyes dry and haggard, she looked like a statue of Despair. To see the grief of that poor couple would have made any body's heart ache.

In the midst of the group of villagers, so busy discussing the events of that memorable day, was an old peasant, who,

from the scars on his face, his firm, upright port, and, above all, his wooden leg, it was easy to see had been a soldier. He had, indeed, been in the wars for twenty years; and a cannon-ball having carried away his leg in his last battle, his grateful country had bestowed on him a wooden 'one, which was all he had gained by all the fighting he had done. He was a man of a decided turn of mind, who preferred deeds to words; and so, after listening impatiently to the harangues of the village orators, he suddenly exclaimed, in his curt way,—

“Enough said! while you are all chattering at once, like so many magpies in a cornfield, the enemy is stealing a march on us. Take your staves and pitchforks, and let us go after the gipsies without more ado. I will get my old musket, and lead the pursuit!”

This proposition was received with shouts of applause. The villagers immediately dispersed in search of weapons, and speedily returned, armed with whatever they could lay their hands on. As night was closing in, each man carried a lighted pine-torch in his hand; and the battalion marched out bravely in search of the enemy, under the command of the old soldier with the wooden leg.

## CHAPTER XI.

A FRUITLESS SEARCH.—THE RETURN TO THE VILLAGE.



THE little party having reached the middle of a wide plain, the old soldier called a halt, at the same time ordering every body to remain perfectly silent. Every ear was strained to catch some sound that might indicate the whereabouts of the gipsies; but nothing was to be heard except the sough of the wind in the trees, and the plaintive hootings of the owls. Gretchen, unable to control her anguish, called, in

agonized tones, "Minna! Minna!" but only the echo of her voice was heard in reply. The party presently resumed their march; but after having wandered hither and thither, for several hours, without having come upon any trace of the ravishers, the lateness of the hour compelled them, notwithstanding Gretchen's entreaties, to return to the village. Next morning, a kind-hearted farmer having lent horses to Carl and the old soldier, the two men went off, and spent the day in scouring the country, far and wide; searching all the neighbouring woods, and inquiring of every one they met. Night found them on the edge of a vast, wild forest. The old soldier represented to Carl that it would be imprudent for them to venture, after dark, into so dangerous a labyrinth; and they therefore turned their horses' heads, and went back to the village, which they reached just as the first gleam of daylight was whitening the horizon. When Carl, with an aching heart, appeared on the threshold of their now desolate home, Gretchen, who had passed the night huddled up on the floor, at the chimney-corner, sprang to the door at a single bound; then, seeing that Carl had come back alone, she uttered a stifled cry, and fell to the ground. Carl threw himself upon his face beside her, and wept and prayed until, at last, his quiet piety sustaining him under his great sorrow, he was able to say, like Job, in the sincerity of his heart, "The Lord gave her to me; the Lord has taken her away from me; blessed be the name of the Lord!"

## CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE GIPSIES PASSED THE NIGHT IN THE FOREST.—  
THE GIPSIES' SUPPER.—HEROIC BEHAVIOUR OF PETROLINO.

It was not surprising that Carl and his friends should have been unable to overtake the gipsies, for the latter had been marching on, for two good hours, before the villagers had thought of pursuing them. Poor little Minna was more dead than alive. On finding herself in the midst of the troop, she had begun to scream with all her might, calling to her father and mother to come and take her away; but the old sorceress had cruelly beaten the poor little thing, threatening the while to kill her if she uttered another cry. After being dragged along for an hour by her captors, who hurried on as fast as they could go, the poor child fell down exhausted.

“What, must I make you find your legs?” cried Zara, taking her by the shoulders, and giving her a violent shaking.

Petrolino, moved with compassion, snatched her out of the hands of the hag, and took her up in his arms. Poor little Minna grew calm at once. She felt that God had given

her a protector. As for Zara, she walked on, muttering angrily against Petrolino, like an ill-natured cur who has just had a bone pulled from between his jaws.

The gipsies reached the entrance of the forest without meeting with any adventure. In order to keep out of reach of the pursuit which they naturally expected would be made after them, they struck into the thickest of the undergrowth, and soon found themselves at the bottom of a densely-wooded valley, shut in by lofty rocks, from the top of which fell, in successive cascades, a limpid stream that, having hollowed out a bed for itself, flowed on its even way through the depths of the forest. The scene presented a pleasing and hospitable aspect, which old Rabba took in at a glance; and he cried, in his sonorous voice,—

“Halt! and get supper ready. We pass the night here.”

The troop came instantly to a standstill. The donkey was promptly relieved of his burden; and the poor animal, delighted to be free, first shook himself several times, then rolled on the ground, with his hoofs in the air, and at last betook himself gravely to the work of grazing. He, at least, had fairly earned his supper. One of the women began to pluck the goose that Kokorik had stolen; the others prepared the rest of the provisions; and the children, meantime, hastened to gather up the dead wood scattered under the trees, and of which, with the aid of a flint and steel (for lucifer-matches were not yet invented), they made

a fire big enough to roast an ox. As soon as the goose had been plucked and cleaned, it was spitted upon an old rapier; the rapier was then laid across a couple of stout stakes, driven strongly into the ground for that purpose, in front of the fire; and the operation of cooking went merrily forward.

"Every body works here, little one," said the Chief to Minna; "I feed no idle folk. Turn the spit!"

Whenever Minna forgot to perform the task imposed on her, the old witch, who had seated herself on the ground close by, reminded her of her duty by rapping her over the knuckles with her stick.

Rabba followed, with lively interest, the various changes produced, in the appearance of his favourite bird, by the action of the fire. When he perceived, by its rich golden colour, and by the delicious perfume it exhaled, that it was done to a turn, he ordered it to be taken off the rapier, cut it up with much dexterity, put the best bits aside for himself, and distributed the rest, with royal generosity, among his subjects. But Minna, though very hungry, refused to eat.

"As you please, little one!" said Rabba, jestingly; "one who has had no supper has all the better appetite for breakfast."

As soon as the gipsies had appeased their hunger, they gave loose to their tongues; the events of the day naturally furnishing the topic of their conversation. Petrolino was complimented by all the band, and especially by Rabba,

who, however, seemed to have forgotten the promised reward. Petrolino, at length, ventured a timid remark on the subject.

"Ha! ha! you see, my children, what it is to have a good memory!" replied Rabba. "But he is right. A Sovereign's word is sacred. Let my Senator's mantle be given to Petrolino!"

One of the women proceeded forthwith to draw out, from the heap of baggage, the famous garment whose brilliant scarlet had so bravely held its own through twenty years of adventurous wanderings. Petrolino did not wait for the morrow to drape himself in the coveted prize, but threw it at once over his shoulders with the artistic taste innate in the Italian people; and then taking his mandolin<sup>1</sup>, he sang one of his prettiest gondolier songs.

"Petrolino, I am pleased with thee!" said Rabba, when Petrolino had finished his song, amidst the plaudits of the assembly, "thou art a great artist, and I confide to thee the education of our latest recruit. By the way, what shall we call her?"

"She is white as a lily; her hair is paler than gold;" said one of the men, "we must call her La Biondina<sup>1</sup>."

"Good," returned the Chief, "the name is written on her face. La Biondina," he continued, addressing the child, "I present to you Petrolino, your father."

"My name is Minna, my father's name is Carl, and my

<sup>1</sup> The little Fair One.



mother's is Gretchen," replied the child, with an air so expressive of infantine vexation that all the gipsies, Rabba included, burst into a fit of uproarious laughter.

"Little one," resumed Rabba, when silence was restored, "listen carefully to what I am going to say. There is no longer any Minna, nor any Carl, nor any Gretchen; you were born in our troop; your name is La Biondina, and your father's name is Petrolino. Try to get this new pedigree into your head; or I shall put it there in a way that might not be altogether to your liking."

This warning was spoken in a tone so hard and dry that Minna did not dare to open her lips. Her little heart seemed to die away within her, like that of the prisoner who has just heard his death-warrant.

"And now, my children," continued Rabba, in a tone somewhat more paternal, "let us roost. We must be up and away by daybreak; so, now, to our silken couches. But mind and sleep with one ear open, as the true gipsy always does. Don't forget," he added, after a moment's pause, "to give your mattresses a good shaking. Remember the proverb, 'As we make our bed, so we lie.'"

Rabba, as we see, was always ready with his little joke; tempering, with these pleasantries, the severity of his rule: a system of government which he found to answer very well.

The gipsies, accustomed to sleep on the ground, with only the stars for bed-curtains, had soon stowed themselves

away for the night. Minna, whom no one took the trouble to look after, seated herself against the trunk of a tree, weeping silently as she thought of her father and mother. Kokorik, happening to pass beside the tree, stopped in front of the little girl.

"Good night, La Biondina! Don't dream ugly dreams, La Biondina!" cried the spiteful boy, with a mocking laugh.



Poor Minna was too much cast down to feel hurt at the little rascal's ill-natured jibes. She knelt down, held up her clasped hands, as though she had been kneeling at her father's knee, and repeated the little prayer he had taught her. Just then, Pétrolino, who was strutting proudly up and down, in all the glory of his scarlet mantle, looking for a promising corner in which to pass the night, perceived, by the light of the moon, the little childish figure cuddled up against the tree, her teeth clacking with cold and fever, the combined result of terror, fatigue, and hunger. The sight moved his pity; he took from his shoulders, not without a sigh, the

comfortable cloak in which he had counted on sleeping as warm as a toast, wrapped the shivering little creature, from head to foot, in its ample folds, and then found, with pardonable satisfaction, that there was still enough of it left unoccupied to cover himself with.

"After all, she is my pupil, almost my daughter," said Petrolino to himself; "it is but right that I should take care of her."

"How kind you are! thank you, thank you!" repeated Minna, several times, in grateful tones.

"The little thing has a good heart; and what a charming voice!" thought Petrolino; "we shall be able to make something of her." He composed himself to sleep with this idea, which filled his brain with a quantity of fantastic dreams. As for Minna—thanks to the comforting warmth produced by the mantle, and to the confidence she felt in her new friend, thanks, above all, to the happy mobility of childish impressions—she had no sooner been rolled up by Petrolino in the former property of the Venetian Senator, than she fell into a sleep as sound and quiet as though she had been lying in her own little cot beside her mother's bed. She was just dreaming that she was going to church in her native village, dressed in her beautiful Sunday-clothes, along with her father and mother, when she was brought back to the miserable reality of her position by Zara, who shook her roughly, as she cried, in shrill tones,—

"Come, get up, lazy-bones!"

Sleep had taken away Minna's fatigue, but it had not filled her poor little stomach; and she could not help saying, in a low voice,—

“I am so hungry!”

Rabba overheard the whisper.

“Ha! ha! the fresh air has sharpened our appetite!” said the old Chief, giving her a piece of bread; “Eat that; and yonder is wine,” he continued, pointing to the brook; “go and drink out of the barrel!”



Minna eagerly devoured her piece of bread, and slaked her thirst with the water of the stream, which she scooped up in the hollow of her hand; and presently afterwards, at a sign from the Chief, the troop resumed its march.

## CHAPTER XIII.

MINNA TRIES TO RUN AWAY, BUT IS QUICKLY STOPPED BY  
THE MALICE OF KOKORIK.



TOWARDS mid-day, the gipsies halted again in the heart of the forest, to take a little food and rest. When they

had finished their repast, as the weather was close and threatened a storm, they lay down on the grass, and were not long in falling asleep. Minna, who had thought of nothing all the morning but of how to slip away, fancied that the moment had come for putting this design into execution. She cast a hurried and anxious glance on her companions; they were all lying on the ground in the oddest attitudes, perfectly still, and with their eyes shut. She held her breath to listen; a chorus of snores, ranging from Kokorik's thin treble to Rabba's sonorous bass, sufficed to re-assure her as to the somnolence of the band. She got up as softly as she could, stepped lightly and noiselessly across the circle formed by the sleeping gipsies, and then began to run with all the speed of her little legs. She thought herself already safe, when Zara, who never slept without keeping one eye open, suddenly cried out,—

“Quick! quick! La Biondina is running away!”

In an instant, the gipsies were on their feet, and hastening in pursuit of the fugitive; but being stopped, every moment, by the bushes and brambles, they saw, with the greatest vexation, that their prey was on the point of escaping them, when Kokorik bethought him of throwing stones at her. One of these missiles struck the little girl, who stumbled and fell, uttering a cry of pain and terror. An instant afterwards she was pounced upon by the terrible old hag, and beaten, by Rabba's order, as never poor child was beaten in this world, since this world contained old hags and little children.

Petrolino hung down his head sadly while this cruel scene was being enacted. Poor Minna's screams wrung his heart ; but he did not venture to remonstrate against a punishment which seemed to him to be deserved. The fact is that Petrolino's ideas of right and wrong had been somewhat confused by his long stay among the gipsies. He possessed, in a high degree,

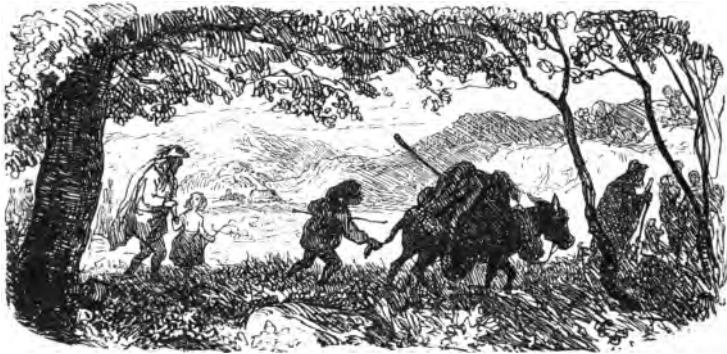


the sentiment of brotherhood ; but, unfortunately, that sentiment among the people in question, as among many others, is not exactly one of justice or of charity.

"My poor little Biondina," said Petrolino, when, the caravan having resumed its march, the child had been replaced under

his care, "you see what comes of being too venturesome. Take my advice, and never try again to run away. The gipsies' legs and arms are longer than yours; they are sure to catch you. Have patience; in a little while you will get used to our wandering way of life, which, after all, is not without its charms, as you will see."

In order to amuse poor Minna, who was far from being convinced by this reasoning, and who felt very sure that she could never be content to stay among these people, Petrolino began to tell her of all the countries he had visited, and how he had gone from Venice to Constantinople, and from Constantinople to Cadiz, crossing, on his way thither, Southern Russia, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Spain. He was at once the poet and the hero of this new Odyssey, filled with incidents, sometimes comic, sometimes tragic; and Minna, who knew nothing of the world outside her native village, listened to his picturesque recitals with an admiring avidity that flattered Petrolino's vanity not a little.





Thanks to Petrolino's interesting stories, and the songs with which he varied them, thanks, above all, to the fatherly care and protection with which he surrounded her, Minna gradually became somewhat more reconciled to the adventurous life of her captors. Happily for her, the excellent moral and religious training bestowed on her by her father had taken too firm a root in her mind to allow of her being perverted by the example of her new companions, unedifying as it was; a fact which will be proved to the reader's satisfaction in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### MINNA COMES NEAR BEING BEATEN FOR NOT STEALING APPLES.

ONE day, in going through a village, the gipsies passed a handsome country-house, standing in a garden surrounded by high walls. Among the trees, whose boughs hung over these walls into the road, as though curious to know what was to be seen there, was a noble apple-tree, laden with tempting apples, but whose branches hung so high that the thirsty vagabonds experienced, at sight of them, all the torments of Tantalus. Unable to reach the apples with their hands, they tried to knock them down by throwing stones up into the tree ; but the apples, affronted, no doubt, at so rude a proceeding, obstinately refused to budge.

“Makitou !” cried Zara, addressing that worthy, “the wise man has said, ‘If the mountain come not to thee, go thou to the mountain.’ Lift the Biondina on to thy shoulder ; she will then be able to get up on the wall and throw the apples down to us.”

"The counsel is good; so here goes!" replied Makitou, stooping to take Minna in his arms; but she threw herself back, exclaiming, with indignation,—

"I am not a thief!"

A shout of laughter burst from the troop at this exclamation, which struck them as being delightfully absurd. Makitou then made a second attempt to get hold of Minna, who cried, with all the resolution she could muster,—

"No, no! I would rather be killed than touch the apples!"

It seemed to her, at that moment, as though she heard the terrible sound of her father's voice ringing in her ears, as it did the day he caught her in Mother Fritz's garden. Zara, rendered furious by this resistance, seized the child by the arm, and was just raising her own to give her a beating, when Petrolino sprang forward upon the hag, and pulled her victim from her, exclaiming, "Vile witch! if you touch a hair of her head, I'll strangle you!"

"How now, wretch! do you dare to threaten me?" cried Zara, more furious than ever.

"I will defend La Biondina against you, and against all others!" returned Petrolino, looking round, with a threatening glance, on his astonished companions.

"You hear him!" sneered Zara, addressing herself to Rabba, who, on hearing the noise of the quarrel, had turned back to see what was the matter, "the world is coming to an end; the sheep are turning upon us!"

“Even sheep,” retorted Petrolino, “may get tired, at last, of being eaten by wolves!”

The Chief, in a firm and imperious tone, commanded the two adversaries to be silent, and then summoned them both before his tribunal. Zara spoke first, declaring that Petrolino was spoiling the Biondina, who was becoming perfectly unbearable, and was of no sort of use to the troop, whose usages and fundamental laws she despised, &c., &c. When Petrolino’s turn came to speak, he did not even attempt to reply to the old hag’s accusations; but simply stated that, having been entrusted with the Biondina’s education, he had no idea of allowing Zara to interfere with his pupil, and to spoil her lovely voice by always making her scream.

After having listened attentively to both parties, the old Chief remained silent for a moment; and then, in a loud voice, pronounced sentence as follows:—

“Considering that, if, from one point of view, Petrolino is in the right, from another point of view, Zara is not in the wrong, and wishing to render equal justice to both parties, we ordain and command, first, that Petrolino shall retain, at his risk and peril, the entire charge of the Biondina’s education, every one, except Petrolino, being strictly forbidden, under pain of the severest penalties, to beat or otherwise punish his pupil; and, secondly, that, for every infraction of the laws of our order of which the Biondina may be guilty, Petrolino shall receive the appropriate number of blows with the stick, the number of the blows to be decided, as occasion presents, by our

wisdom. If, through Petrolino's negligence, the Biondina should escape from us, the number of blows shall be tripled. I have said it."

This verdict, worthy of King Solomon, was received by the troop with shouts of enthusiasm. Petrolino, somewhat out of countenance, began to scratch his ear; but, a sentiment of generosity getting the better of his momentary hesitation, he replied,—

"I accept the sentence. And now, my dear Biondina, I am at your mercy! But, by Saint Mark, my Lord, have a little pity upon my shoulders!"

Minna was so much touched by Petrolino's devotion, that she promised not to try, any more, to run away.

## CHAPTER XV.

HOW WINTER FOUND POOR MINNA IN RAGS, AND HER FEET  
IN SHOES OF WHICH LITTLE MORE REMAINED THAN THE  
SOLES.



WINTER came upon the troop at a galloping pace, preceded by winds and storms, his usual couriers. Flocks of storks were seen, from time to time, high in the air, winging their way towards the warm sun of Egypt; and wild ducks and wild

geese alighted on the edge of pools and marshes, bringing the snow and icicles of the North upon their wings. The last dead leaves were falling from the trees with a plaintive rustle that seemed to bemoan the hard fate of the boughs in having to remain naked and bare through the terrible cold of winter. Poor Minna might have been, not unaptly, compared to those melancholy trees. She had left on the road the white and red roses of her cheeks, and the pretty plumpness of neck and limbs that had been her mother's pride; the ragged remnants of her clothes could no longer keep out either cold or rain; and as for her shoes, they were threatening to leave her altogether. But she bore her sufferings in silence, for fear of adding to Petrolino's anxiety on her account; anxiety which frequently caused him to murmur to himself, when he looked at her,—

“*Poverina! poverina!*”

For Petrolino had come to regard his little charge with an almost fatherly affection. His heart, naturally tender, but which had shut itself up, like the leaves of the sensitive plant, at the contact of the coarse and cynical companions among whom he had cast in his lot, opened with delight in the presence of the lovely little creature, the caressing tones of whose voice seemed constantly to be saying to him,—

“Thank you, friend Petrolino!”

<sup>1</sup> Poor little thing! poor little thing!

## CHAPTER XVI.

HOW PETROLINO, WITHOUT KNOWING IT, FOLLOWED THE  
EXAMPLE OF THE GREAT SAINT MARTIN.—THE TAILOR  
HERMANN AND HIS WIFE PROVE THAT THERE ARE STILL  
KIND PEOPLE IN THE WORLD.



WHEN Minna's shoes had dropped completely to pieces, so  
that there was nothing more left of them, Petrolino; who could



not bear to see her pretty, bare feet exposed to the contact of the hard, cold ground, with its alternatives of dust, and mud, and stones, took her in his arms, and carried her—notwithstanding the ridicule of his companions, and Minna's entreaties that he would let her walk—all the way to the next village, where Rabba had decided that they should pass the night.

Petrolino availed himself of this halt to look after Minna's wardrobe. He began by buying her a pair of shoes; and he then took her to a tailor's shop.

"Can you make me a good warm cloak for the little girl out of this?" he inquired, taking the famous mantle from his shoulders.

"To be sure I can!" replied the tailor, after he had spread out, upon the counter, that magnificent product of Venetian industry; "why there's cloth enough in it to make cloaks for a whole family!"

"Then set to work at once," said Petrolino, "for I must have the little cloak this very evening. See, here is money!" he continued, taking a gold florin from his pocket.

"Hey-day, master!" returned the tailor, with a smile, "you don't give one time to breathe! But you shall be served to your mind, for the little cloak will not be amiss such bitter weather as this. Come here, wife," he continued, raising his voice, "and lend me a hand!"

The tailor's wife set to work at once on the cloak, sewing briskly under her husband's direction. But she seemed

unable to keep her eyes from Minna, whose sweet sad face and tattered clothes appeared to affect her painfully.

"She is your daughter?" asked the tailor's wife of Petrolino.

"Yes."

"She has lost her mother?"

"Yes."

"Poor child!"

Minna, whose heart was already moved by the aspect of this humble home, which reminded her of her father's cottage, could not restrain her tears; Petrolino scolded her gently for crying, and made her sit near the stove to warm herself.

"Hermann!" presently said the tailor's wife, in a low voice, to her husband, "what if I should give one of our dear Lisbeth's frocks to this poor little thing?"

"Just what I was thinking," replied the tailor.

Minna was, accordingly, soon clothed from head to foot by the good Elsa, in the things left behind her by the little daughter of these worthy people, when she went away with the Angels. The clean linen, the good woollen garments, the nice soft stockings, warmed and comforted her poor little body; while the motherly words and embraces of the kind Elsa put warmth and comfort into her heart. When supper was ready, the tailor and his wife made Petrolino and Minna sit down to table with them, heaping up their plates and filling their glasses, so that they made such a meal as had not fallen to Minna's lot since she left her home. Nothing

makes people so happy as the consciousness that they have done a kindness; so you may judge whether Hermann and his wife were merry that evening, and how happy the two poor wanderers were made by their welcome! To give, in return, a little pleasure to their kind hosts, who were again



stitching busily at Minna's cloak, Petrolino took his mandoline and sang several of his prettiest barcarolles <sup>1</sup>. When, at length,

<sup>1</sup> Boatmen's Songs.

the little cloak was finished, and fastened round Minna's neck, the good Hermann and his wife flatly refused to take any payment; nor could all Petrolino's entreaties induce them to accept a single kreutzer. They separated with tears in their eyes, as though they had always known one another. Good-hearted people never seem like strangers; it is as though they had always been friends, even when they meet for the first time.

It was late when Petrolino and Minna left the tailor's hospitable dwelling; and they were obliged to walk very fast, in order to catch up with the rest of the troop. While they were on the way, Minna could not help scolding her adoptive father.

"You said that I was your daughter, and that my mother was dead; and you know very well that it is not true, friend Petrolino! It is wrong to tell a lie."

Petrolino coloured, and stammered an excuse, for he knew that the Biondina's reproach was merited.

The little girl's voice was beginning to rouse the voice of his conscience; and he felt that he must try to make himself better in order to please his dear little pupil.

## CHAPTER XVII.

HOW KOKORIK MADE FUN OF MINNA'S BRILLIANT METAMORPHOSIS, AND HOW PETROLINO TURNED THE TABLES UPON HIM.



WHEN Petrolino and Minna entered the barn in which, unknown to its owner, the gipsies were doing him the honour of passing the night, the whole troop had been sound asleep for some hours. As soon as day broke, Rabba gave the signal for setting out again; and the band was on foot in a moment. Minna's brilliant metamorphosis at once arrested their attention,

and called forth a general expression of surprise and admiration, not unmingled with irony.

"Hullo!" cried one of them, "Petrolino's mantle has had a baby!"

"Shoes! and clean linen!" exclaimed another, "have you been stripping a Prince's daughter?"

"My eye! how droll they look!" cried Kokorik, "like an old lobster giving a claw to a crawfish!"

This picturesque witticism excited a general burst of laughter. Petrolino, without allowing himself to be in the least disconcerted, looked the ugly, dirty little rascal all over, from head to foot, and then said to him, with the utmost gravity,—

"Kokorik, my good friend, when one is so fortunate as to be a handsome little fellow, like you, and to have kind relatives who bathe and perfume one every day, and dress one in silk and velvet, one should not make fun of poor miserable folks who are not so favoured. It is really not generous of you, my charming little Kokorik!"

This retort completely turned the tables, and brought all the laughs over to Petrolino's side. Every eye was directed to Zara, the grandmother of the neglected and malicious little ragamuffin called Kokorik. Petrolino's shaft had been too well aimed not to wound. The old witch went off in a fit of fury; and poured forth a torrent of abuse against all the troop in general, and Minna in particular, although the poor child was the only one present who had not laughed. At length

Rabba exclaimed, brandishing his heavy stick with a menacing gesture,—

“Silence, all of you! I’ll knock down the first who dares to speak a word!”



## CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW MINNA WAS SAVED FROM A FRIGHTFUL DANGER BY  
THE BOLDNESS OF PETROLINO.



WINTER had set in with uncommon severity, so that Minna's new clothes really seemed to have been given to her by Providence, in order to preserve her for better days. But the poor child had still, alas ! to undergo some terrible trials !

It was the middle of December, and the snow was falling fast, covering the country as with a vast winding-sheet. One



night, the gipsies were obliged to cross a forest of fir-trees. A pack of wolves had been, for several hours, following in their track, howling horribly. Rabba, like a skilful and prudent General, placed the women and children in the middle of the troop; and having fallen back, with Makitou, into the rear of the party, as being the post of danger, he set up a loud, discordant song, the others joining in, at the top of their voices. This warlike stratagem proved, for a time, successful. The wolves, frightened by the noise, stood still, hesitating; when, unluckily, the donkey, shaking with terror, took it into his head—perhaps in order to keep up his courage—to add his braying to the chorus of the gipsies. The wolves responded to the sound with a hideous clamour of howls, and at once resumed their furious rush after the party.

“The brutes have got scent of Rustaud,” said Makitou to Rabba; “’tis all over with us!”

“Unload the ass,” shouted Rabba, “and fly for your lives!”

In the twinkling of an eye the baggage was taken from the ass’s back, and the unfortunate animal abandoned to the fury of the wolves; while the terrified gipsies tore away through snow and brambles as fast as their legs could carry them. As they rushed on, they heard, mingled with the howlings of the wolves, the agonized brayings of their poor four-footed companion, that seemed to be calling upon them for help. The sound of the hideous struggle was speedily followed by a death-like silence; and the gipsies were just beginning to fancy

themselves out of danger, when a dull sound of close and rapid trotting reached their ears. It was the wolves that, having devoured their prey, were following the troop more furiously than before, their fierce hunger whetted by the taste of blood. The danger was now greater than ever; and Zara, who hated poor little Minna, said, in the gipsy-tongue, to Rabba and Makitou,—

“We must make a fresh sacrifice to necessity. The Biondina is of no use to us. Throw her to the wolves. While they are eating her, we shall have time to get clear of the forest.”



Minna, who was beginning to understand the gipsies' language, heard this horrible proposition, and pressed herself, in

terror, still closer to her friend Petrolino, who snatched her up in his arms, and, turning towards Zara, said to her in his sternest tones,—

“I will defend the Biondina against both wolves and witches !”

Happily, however, the party was now rapidly approaching the edge of the forest, and the sun was beginning to show himself above the horizon. Wolves, like wicked people, are afraid of light; and as the gipsies emerged, from under the cover of the trees, into the open country, the frightful beasts suddenly stopped, gave vent to their disappointment in a few last howls, turned tail, and were soon out of sight in the depths of the forest.



## CHAPTER XIX.

THE MILK-WHITE KID SAVES THE LIFE OF A LITTLE LAMB.



EVERY thing in this life comes to an end ; the days of wind and wet do not last for ever, any more than the sunny ones. After

the dark, cold Winter, comes the pleasant Spring. On one of those bright, warm April mornings, when the sun seems determined to show to the fields and flowers that he is not yet frozen, the gipsies had stopped to rest on the borders of a wood. Petrolino was giving a lesson in singing and dancing to the Biondina, who went through with her exercises in a style that excited the admiration of the spectators in general, and of old Rabba in particular. Not far off, at the foot of a gently-rounded hill, was a flock of sheep, sleeping in the sun, while the shepherd and his dog followed the example of the sheep.

“Kokorik,” said Zara to her grandson, “if you are not a fool, we shall have roast lamb for our supper!”

“Kokorik will show that he’s no fool, grandmother!”

So saying, Kokorik began to creep along, stealthily as a wolf, in the direction of the hill, keeping himself always under the shadow of the trees. He had already fixed his choice on a pretty little lamb, very plump, very fat, that was sleeping beside its dam, in the full confidence inspired, in the minds of all well-bred sheep, by the presence of the shepherd and his dog. Happily, while Innocence slumbers, the eye of Providence keeps watch! Minna had divined the plot hatched up between Zara and Makitou; her pity was aroused for the hapless sheep, and she determined to save them from Kokorik’s ugly paws. The boy, having crawled through the grass like a viper, was just raising himself on his hands and knees, to seize the lamb, when Minna began to sing, in her most ringing tones,—

“Hop! jump! play!—old tricks and new!” &c.

The effect produced by the clear, childish voice was magical ! Dog, shepherd, and sheep, were wide awake, and on their feet, in an instant. Kokorik was already making off, as fast as he could, with his prize on his shoulders ; but the plaintive bleatings of the lamb, with which the dam and the rest of the flock were now bleating in concert, attracted the attention of the shepherd, and he was just starting in pursuit of the thief, when the dog, coming up with the latter at a bound, seized, with his teeth, the seat of Kokorik's trousers and what was inside of it. Like the young Spartan with the fox, Kokorik, despite the torture he was suffering, held on to his prey, determined not to give it up ; but the shepherd, with his crook, coming to the



rescue, reinforced the attack of his dog with such a shower of blows upon Kokorik's head and back, that the latter was forced, at last, to drop the lamb, and scampered away, howling with pain and rage. Zara, furious, threw herself directly upon Minna, before she even thought of helping her grandson ; for, in her wicked and cruel heart, hatred always stirred more quickly than love.

“Odious Biondina ! maker of mischief !” shrieked the hag,

as she sprang forward to seize the frightened child by the throat, "this time, I must and will strangle thee!"

But Petrolino, who, since the adventure in the forest, never lost sight of Zara's movements, caught her in his vigorous grasp, and held her against a tree, while he shouted to Rabba, demanding justice. Rabba, knowing how useful the Biondina might be to the troop, in the great towns through which they were about to pass, condemned the witch to receive a bastinado of fifty blows. She was accordingly bound to a tree, and was about to undergo the punishment she so richly deserved, when Minna, moved with compassion, threw herself on her knees before the astonished Chief, and begged him, with tears, to pardon Zara.

"Well, well, I grant your request," said Rabba, "as a reward for the pleasure you gave me just now. As for you, old vixen!" he continued, addressing Zara, "try to be a little less violent in future; and do not forget that, if you are still in a whole skin, it is to the Biondina that you owe it!"

## CHAPTER XX.

HOW MINNA MAKES HER FIRST APPEARANCE IN PUBLIC, AND  
HOW THE PERFORMANCE IS SUDDENLY BROUGHT TO A  
CLOSE BY THE STEALING OF A SNUFF-BOX.



THE gipsies reached the city of Darmstadt in the beginning of May, without having met with any other adventure worthy of



being transmitted to posterity. Their arrival created no little sensation. All the townspeople, and especially the nursemaids and children, attracted by the sight of the odd-looking strangers, turned out into the streets, followed them with exclamations of curiosity and delight, and formed a dense crowd about them when they stopped in the Market-square, which had been chosen by Rabba as the scene of the Biondina's first appearance. The old Chief, and those of the troop who were not to take part in the performance, remained a little apart, seated on the ground, beside the baggage. Makitou and Kokorik were charged to keep order around the piece of dingy carpet that constituted the stage. When the pair had succeeded, not without a good deal of trouble, in getting the people to stand back sufficiently to leave a space free for the artists of this open-air entertainment to go through their performances, Petrolino began to play on his mandoline, and thereupon all the windows of the Market-square flew open, as though by enchantment. The proceedings began with a gipsy-chorus, which was considered by the public as rather a wild and outlandish sort of composition. When this was over, Petrolino bent forward towards his little pupil, and whispered a few words in her ear. He then struck a few chords on the mandoline, by way of prelude, and the Biondina sang a Venetian barcarolle, that threw the whole crowd into raptures. The Market-square rang with acclamations, accompanied by a shower of silver and copper coin, which Kokorik caught with a dexterity that would have done honour to a monkey, and which

he afterwards deposited respectfully at Rabba's feet, not, however, without having contrived to secrete a few of them in his own pocket.

An attentive observer who should have chanced, just at this moment, to glance round the Square, would not have failed to remark, at the window of one of the old-fashioned houses, two children, of about eight and ten years of age, who were watching the performances of the gipsies with every sign of the liveliest curiosity. Standing behind them was a man of about forty, with an intelligent face, and a glance at once animated and gentle, who seemed to share the pleasure so evidently felt by the two youthful spectators. This man was their father, Johann Cornelius, a Doctor of music, and a learned Composer, who lacked nothing but the aid of circumstances to become rich and famous. While waiting for Glory and Fortune to find him out, this man of genius, being poor, was obliged, in order to bring up his family, to give music-lessons, and at a very low price. The barcarolle that Minna had just sung had pleased him greatly.

"What a delightful voice!" said Doctor Cornelius, turning to his wife, who was seated at another window, seeing every thing that went on in the Market-square as well as though she had not been knitting so busily; "but that little girl does not look at all like a gipsy!"

"It is, no doubt, a child they have stolen!" returned Madame Cornelius.

"Then I'm sure I pity her poor parents; for they must

suffer terribly at being deprived of such a charming little creature!" said Doctor Cornelius. "But I am forgetting my lessons. My dear Wilhelmina, take good care of Berta and Friedrich!" he continued, as, having stooped down to kiss the two children, he turned to kiss his wife; and then, having taken his hat and cane, he went out by the garden-door, at the back of the house, in order to avoid crossing the Market-square, which was becoming more and more crowded every moment, as is always the case on such occasions, as every body hastens to see what can have brought the crowd together.

Petrolino, proud of the Biondina's success, now began to play a tarantella<sup>1</sup>, glancing round on his auditors, meantime, with a look that seemed to say,—

"My dear friends, you are charmed, already, with my little pupil; but just wait a moment, and if you are not enchanted, electrified, astounded, my name is not Petrolino!"

Petrolino was not wrong in his calculations; for the tarantella was the Biondina's master-piece. She began by balancing herself on her little feet, in a series of seemingly unstudied movements, full of grace. These movements became gradually more and more animated and rapid, until presently she began to turn, and turn, and turn, as though she had been seized with vertigo; and all this with so exquisite a sense of rhythm, with a pantomime so expressive and graceful, that the spectators stood

<sup>1</sup> A Neapolitan dance, representing the convulsive movements supposed to be caused by the bite of a certain kind of spider.

watching her, motionless, open-mouthed, and all eyes rivetted on the little dancer.

Among the warmest of the Biondina's admirers was a stout, important-looking personage, whom all present seemed to regard with great deference. He wore a powdered wig, a three-cornered hat, and a fine coat edged with gold riband; he had white silk stockings, and silver buckles in his shoes; and he leaned, with both hands, on a thick ivory-headed cane. From time to time he drew, out of the pocket of his richly-brocaded silken waistcoat, a handsome gold snuff-box, from which he took, majestically, a pinch of snuff, which he sniffed no less majestically. Makitou's attention had been speedily drawn to this magnificent old gentleman, and especially to his gold snuff-box; for gold always acted on Makitou with just such a magnetic attraction as that of the loadstone for iron. Under pretence of keeping back the crowd from encroaching on the space reserved for the gipsies' exhibition, he placed himself close beside the stout old gentleman; and, taking advantage of a moment when the latter, leaning on his heavy cane, was following with lively interest the giddy dance of the Biondina, he contrived to insinuate his long fingers into the wide pocket of the richly-flowered waistcoat, and drew the snuff-box deftly from its hiding-place. But, at the very same instant, he felt himself seized in a grasp of steel, and heard a rough voice exclaiming,—

“Ah! thief, I have you!”

The unlucky rogue had not known that the majestic old

gentleman, whom he had selected as the subject of his operations, was no less a personage than the Burgomaster himself; and that this respectable magistrate was attended by a policeman, whose eyes, sharpened by long practice, had at once divined his intention, and who was thus able to catch him in the very act.

"Why, Pinchmann, what's the matter?" inquired the Burgomaster in the tone of annoyance so naturally assumed by a worthy and dignified magistrate when disturbed in the enjoyment of his little amusements.

"Mein Herr, this rascal has just stolen your Excellency's snuff-box!" replied the policeman.

The Burgomaster began instantly to fumble in the pocket of his waistcoat, but of course without finding the snuff-box.

"Gipsies are all a pack of thieves!" exclaimed that functionary, in an angry voice. "Take this fellow to prison directly!"

The show was immediately interrupted; the crowd pressed eagerly forward, to learn what was going on; while the gipsies, seeing their comrade carried off, began whining in chorus,—

"Have pity on us, Excellency! Pardon! pardon!" Every body in the crowd was asking every body else what was the matter.

"A gipsy thief has stolen the Burgomaster's snuff-box!" said one.

“ Yes, it must be something of that kind, for they are taking one of them to prison !” said another.

The words “ thief,” “ prison,” rang fearfully in Minna’s ears. Seized with panic, she instinctively threw her little cloak over her shoulders ; and as, in the general confusion, no one thought of her, she slipped unobserved through the crowd, got out of the Market-square, ran on and on, through street after street, until she found herself in a broad road, outside of the town ; and then, breathless, and overcome with fatigue and terror, she fell down at the foot of a tree, and fainted away.



## CHAPTER XXI.

HOW DR. CORNELIUS FOUND MINNA INSENSIBLE AT THE FOOT  
OF THE TREE, AND CARRIED HER HOME IN HIS ARMS.



DOCTOR CORNELIUS, after giving his music-lessons, went out of the town to take a little walk, and to think over an oratorio

that he was composing for Easter Sunday. The shades of evening, beginning to close in, at length recalled the composer to the things of common life; and he accordingly turned about, and walked back towards the town, quickening his pace that he might not be late for supper, when his foot caught against something lying, in a heap, under a tree. He stopped to see what it was, and perceived, to his surprise, that it was a child. Was it dead, or only asleep? Moved with compassion, he stooped down and took up the little creature.

"If I am not greatly mistaken," said the worthy Composer to himself, "it is the little gipsy we saw, just now, in the Market-square. She is not asleep, but has fainted; no doubt, from fatigue and hunger".

A brook ran near by. Doctor Cornelius dipped his handkerchief into the stream, and bathed the face of the unconscious child, who, ere long, began to come to herself, and looked about her with an air of mingled astonishment and terror.

"Fear nothing, little one; I am a friend!" said Dr. Cornelius, laying her gently on his left arm, and drawing over her the lappet of his wide coat, as he resumed his walk homewards. Minna, reassured by the kindly ways of her new friend, put her arms round his neck, and fell fast asleep; and it was thus that Doctor Cornelius reached home with his light burden.

"Oh, papa, what have you brought for us?" cried the two children, as he came in.

"Look and see!" replied their father, drawing aside the lappet of his coat.



"Oh! how pretty she is!" exclaimed the children; "why, she is the little gipsy we saw this afternoon!"

Doctor Cornelius then told them how he had found her by the roadside, lying in a fainting-fit at the foot of a tree; how he had restored her to consciousness; and, in short, all that the Reader knows already.

The two children listened with the utmost interest to this recital, while the good mother took Minna on her lap, and



gently drew off her shoes. Berta fetched, from the kitchen, a cup of warm milk that Minna swallowed at a draught, without

opening her eyes; and then, having laid the weary wanderer on the sofa, and spread a shawl over her, the worthy Composer and



his family left her to sleep, while they went to supper, thanking God that the poor child had been brought to them to be fed and comforted in her need.



## CHAPTER XXII.

DOCTOR CORNELIUS PREDICTS THAT MINNA WILL BE A GREAT  
MUSICIAN.



WHEN Berta and Friedrich had gone to bed, Doctor Cornelius and his wife remained in the parlour, where Minna was still sound asleep on the sofa.

Wilhelmina sat down by the lamp, with her sewing; her husband placed himself at the harpsichord, to finish the *finale* of his oratorio, which was to represent the voices of Saints and Patriarchs singing in chorus with the Angels. Doctor Cornelius had tried, several times, to compose this *finale*, which was to be the crowning glory of his oratorio; but he had never been able to get it to his mind. That evening, however, the excitement of his feelings, caused by the emotions of the day, seemed to fill his soul with the most admirable musical phrases, that flowed from his fingers in streams of glorious sound. Minna, awakened by the music, knelt upon the couch, listening to the sublime strains, her hands clasped, her eyes full of tears, and her whole being wrapped in an ecstasy of wondering delight. When Doctor Cornelius had finished his improvisation, Wilhelmina made a sign to him to look at the little girl. He was astonished at the effect produced by the music on one so young; and, with the prophetic insight of genius, he said to his wife,—

“That child will one day be a great artist!”



## CHAPTER XXIII.

HOW MINNA, ON WAKING, WAS RECEIVED BY BERTA AND  
FRIEDRICH.



WHEN Berta and Friedrich opened their eyes next morning, their first thought was for the little gipsy. They dressed

themselves as quickly as possible, and hastened to their mother's bed-room, where the good lady was busy selecting, with the aid of the servant, from Berta's clothes, the things that could most easily be changed so as to fit the little stranger. After having bidden their mother good morning, the two children went up to the bed in which Minna had passed the night.

"Take good care not to waken her!" said Wilhelmina, in a low voice.

"Oh, we will not make the least noise!" returned the children, as they went on tiptoe to the bed, opened the curtains very softly, and peeped in. Minna, who was already awake, looked at them, at first, with some alarm; but the kind young faces inspired her with confidence, and she soon met their inquiring glances with a smile.

"Mamma! she is not asleep!" cried the two children in a breath.

"You have wakened her!" said the mother.

"No, indeed, mamma! she was awake already."

"Have you had a good sleep, little one?" inquired Wilhelmina, coming up to the bed.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Minna, timidly.

"What is your name?" asked Berta.

"My name is Minna."

"Minna! what a pretty name! My name is Berta; and my brother's is Friedrich."

"You are tiring her!" said Wilhelmina, with a smile. "Go

and say your prayers; and then look over your lessons until breakfast is ready."

The two children immediately withdrew; for they were very obedient, and always tried to please their mother.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW MINNA WAS DRESSED IN NICE NEW CLOTHES, AND HAD  
A BREAKFAST SUCH AS SHE HAD NOT EATEN FOR A LONG  
TIME.



A BATH had been got ready for Minna, who greatly needed a good scrubbing, for the gipsies are not the cleanest of people ;



and Wilhelmina saw, with surprise, that the little girl's delicate white skin was covered with blue stains.

"Have you had a bad fall, my child, that your poor little body is all discoloured in this style?" inquired the kind-hearted mother.

"No," replied Minna, "it was old Zara; she was always beating me."

"Poor little soul!" sighed the good Wilhelmina, as she tenderly dried the bruised limbs with a soft towel. When the bath was over, she dressed the little stranger in clean sweet-smelling linen, nice stockings and shoes, and a pretty frock; and then combed out her beautiful flaxen hair, with its clustering curls, just as Minna's own mother used to do on the happy Sunday mornings before she was stolen by the gipsies. The careful toilette was scarcely completed, when the servant came in to say that breakfast was ready; an announcement that Minna heard with great satisfaction, for she was dreadfully hungry, though she did not dare to say so. Her entrance into the breakfast-room was hailed with cries of joy and admiration; and she was placed at table beside Berta and Friedrich, who were so busy in helping the little gipsy to every thing before them, that they kept forgetting to eat what was on their own plates.



## CHAPTER XXV.

HOW DOCTOR CORNELIUS, AFTER CROSS-QUESTIONING MINNA ABOUT HER FAMILY AND HER VILLAGE, FINDS HIMSELF NO WISER THAN HE WAS BEFORE.



WHEN breakfast was over, Doctor Cornelius took Minna on his knee.

“What is your name, my child?” he inquired.

“The gipsies called me the Biondina; but my real name is Minna.”

“Then you were not born among the gipsies?”

“Oh, no, Sir!” replied Minna, whose voice began to tremble, while the big tears rolled down her cheeks. “They carried me off by force, and dragged me away with them. Oh, take me home to my father and mother, and GOD will reward you!” she continued, clasping her hands, and looking up into the good Composer’s face with so touching an expression of entreaty that the whole family felt the tears come into their eyes.

“Certainly, dear Minna; we will take you home to your parents!” returned the good man.

“Let us go directly!” said Minna.

“I am quite willing; but where do you live?”

“In the village!”

“Very good; but what is the name of the village?”

“I don’t know; we always say—The village! There are a great many houses, and a pretty little church, and beautiful big trees; and Mother Fritz’s garden is just opposite my father’s cottage.”

These indications not appearing to Doctor Cornelius sufficiently definite, he made a fresh effort to obtain something rather more precise.

“Did you walk a long way before getting here?” he inquired, resuming the thread of his interrogation.

“Oh, yes!”

“How many days?”

“I don’t know. It was warm weather when they took me away; and then it grew cold, and we had snow; and now it is warm again.”

“But, now I think of it,” said Doctor Cornelius to his wife, “the gipsies have probably not left the town; and I shall perhaps be able to learn from them ——”

“Oh, do not take me back to them!” cried Minna, throwing her arms round him in an agony of terror: “they are so cruel, especially old Zara; she was always beating me!”

“Fear nothing, my poor child!” replied Doctor Cornelius, patting her kindly on the head, and kissing her: “we will keep you with us until we have found your parents. Will you stay with us, little Minna?”

“Oh, yes, yes!” exclaimed Minna, joyfully; “I was so miserable with them; and here it is like being in Heaven!”



## CHAPTER XXVI.

### WHAT DR. CORNELIUS LEARNS AT THE BURGOMASTER'S.

DOCTOR CORNELIUS, having heard from his wife that one of the gipsies had been arrested for stealing the Burgomaster's snuff-box, bethought him that he could probably, by giving a few thalers to the prisoner, find out from the latter the



name of the village whence Minna had been carried off. So he put on his best coat and went to the Guildhall, to request the Burgomaster to give him permission to visit the imprisoned gipsy. But when he got there, he found that honourable

functionary in a towering passion with the jailor, which, perhaps, was hardly to be wondered at, seeing that the man of keys had just come to inform his Excellency that the prisoner had managed to escape during the night, and that



all the gipsies had disappeared without leaving the slightest trace of their passage.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

THE CORNELIUS FAMILY FINDS ITSELF IN POSSESSION OF  
ANOTHER DAUGHTER.

“So there’s an end of the matter!” said Doctor Cornelius to himself, as he turned his steps homewards. “The only



chance of finding Minna’s parents has broken down; and there’s nothing for us to do but to keep this poor child with us. What a vexatious business!”

If the good Composer had looked closely into his own heart, he would perhaps have been surprised to find that this "vexatious business" really caused him a secret pleasure; for he already felt a singular affection for the little gipsy.

"She shed tears on hearing my oratorio!" he had several times repeated to himself. He could not, however, help feeling a little anxious on thinking of the extra cost it would add to the housekeeping, and how hard he found it already to make both ends meet.

"Well, I must work a little harder," thought the good man, as he approached his house; "and something seems to tell me that my oratorio will be a success. I feel sure of it!"

On reaching home, he informed his wife of the escape of the prisoner, and the disappearance of the gipsies.

"And now what are we to do with the little girl?" he continued, trying to read Wilhelmina's thought in her eyes.

At this moment Minna came in from the garden with Berta and Friedrich: the three little people seemed to be the best friends in the world.

"My children," said Wilhelmina, looking up into her husband's face, "you have another little sister!"

Berta and Friedrich began jumping for joy on hearing these words; and the good Composer affectionately pressed his wife's hand. She had so well understood his wishes!

"And now, my little Minna," said Doctor Cornelius, "you have nothing more to fear from those horrid gipsies; for it will



be a long time before they feel inclined to pass again through our good city of Darmstadt !”

“Oh, dear, dear, dear, what have I done?” cried Minna, suddenly bursting into tears, and wringing her hands in despair. “Poor Petrolino! he will be so dreadfully beaten because of me! I was so happy here, I had forgotten every thing! Petrolino has always been so kind to me; and now he will think me a bad, ungrateful girl. I must go back to him! If only they have not killed him!”

Minna was so agitated, so upset, that it was, for some minutes, quite impossible for Doctor Cornelius and his wife to obtain from her any comprehensible explanation of this strange scene. But when the poor child had become a little



more calm, she told them how Petrolino had so often saved her from the blows of the cruel Zara, and how, at last, the Chief of

the troop had passed a sentence making Petrolino responsible for the Biondina, and condemning him to be bastinadoed if she escaped ; how she had solemnly promised her friend never to run away again ; and how, in the terror that had come over her in the Market-square, she had forgotten all about her promise, and had run away.

Though pleased with this proof of the conscientiousness of his adopted daughter, Doctor Cornelius endeavoured to show her that her scruples were exaggerated ; that, in regard to Petrolino, she had been relieved of the responsibility of her promise by circumstances beyond her control ; and that, at all events, the gipsies were now much too far off to be overtaken.

This reasoning, though perfectly true and just, did not suffice to set Minna's conscience entirely at rest ; and it was long before she could forget her fear lest Rabba's terrible sentence should have been too literally executed on the shoulders of the unfortunate Petrolino. But the care and tenderness lavished upon her by the good Composer and his excellent wife, and the affection of Berta and Friedrich, gradually calmed the excitement of her childish remorse, and led her unconsciously to give herself up to the charms of a quiet and innocent life, so well suited to her gentle and affectionate nature.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

SHOWING WHO WERE MINNA'S FIRST TEACHERS, AND THE  
WONDERFUL PROGRESS SHE MADE UNDER HER YOUTHFUL  
PROFESSORS.

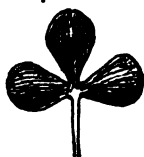
IT really seemed as though God, who is so good, took pleasure in rewarding the good deed of Doctor Cornelius and his wife; for every thing prospered with them from the day when they adopted the poor little outcast. The oratorio was performed, on Easter Sunday, in presence of the Court, and was received with such enthusiasm that the Landgrave appointed its author to be his Chapel-master, with a salary of six hundred florins. Happiness is like misfortune in one thing: it never comes alone. It is like some magnificent personage who often will not give himself the trouble to come to those who desire his presence, but whose march, if once you can get him to move, is always accompanied by a numerous and brilliant suite. Before the successful performance of his oratorio, Doctor Cornelius had been obliged to run after pupils; but, from that time, it was the pupils who ran after him. However, his good fortune did not spoil him, as is too often the case in this world. He remained, in prosperity, just what he had been in adversity:

simple, upright, laborious, and kind. The only change that honour and success produced in his life was that he now did more good than formerly, because he had larger means. He was fond of saying, "The more we have, the more we owe to those who have less than ourselves;" and he carried out this principle so diligently, that his wife was sometimes obliged, from motives of prudence, to moderate his zeal. It will be readily believed that such a man could not fail in the discharge of the duties involved in his adoption of Minna, whose education was now as carefully attended to as it had been neglected among the gipsies.



Berta was charged to teach her to read, to sew, and to embroider; Friedrich taught her to write, to cipher, and to

draw: for their father knew, by his own experience, that the best way to learn any thing oneself is to teach it to others. As for her music-lessons, her adoptive father reserved them for himself, as a recreation after the labours of the day. Minna made such rapid progress, in all these studies, that she seemed less to learn than to remember things already learned. Before a year had passed she knew as much as her little professors, Berta and Friedrich; she could sing almost every thing at sight; and she played so perfectly, in honour of the birthday of Doctor Cornelius, a piece of very difficult music—which she had studied on purpose, unknown to him—that she brought tears of delight to the eyes of the good composer.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

MINNA CAUSES GREAT JOY TO DOCTOR CORNELIUS.



No extraordinary event occurred during the first two years that followed Minna's entrance into the house of the good

Doctor Cornelius. But the winter of the third year was destined to become a memorable date in the annals of the family. The Landgrave had commanded his Chapel-master to compose, for the Christmas festival, an oratorio that was to be performed in the Court theatre. Doctor Cornelius had been working, for two months past, at the rehearsals of this new composition. Christmas was at hand; but the *maestro* was not yet satisfied with the execution of his work. Into the scene in which the Angels announce to the Shepherds the birth of the Saviour, Doctor Cornelius had introduced a solo which he justly regarded as a gem; but it needed an Angel to render it worthily; and, unfortunately, Angels are rare in our planet, especially on the stage. The young girl who was to sing this solo had nothing angelic about her, either in her person, which was heavy and lumpish, or in her voice, which was utterly deficient in charm; nor could all the efforts of Doctor Cornelius succeed in enabling her to do justice to a part for which Nature had not fitted her. At the close of the last general rehearsal, the poor Composer returned home almost in despair; he went straight to his wife's chamber, and threw himself into an arm-chair, with the gesture of one whose last hope has deserted him. But just as the good Wilhelmina was endeavouring to restore his courage, a sweet, clear voice, issuing from the adjoining room, began to sing the beautiful solo in tones so pure, so vibrant, and so sympathetic, that Doctor Cornelius raised himself up in his chair, and listened, breathless, as though under the influence of a bewitching

dream. When the strain came to an end he started forward, threw open the door, and perceived Minna standing at the harpsichord. He went up to the little songstress, and said to her, with a beating heart, "Minna, the solo that you have just sung, do you think you would have the courage to sing it, to-morrow, before the Landgrave and all the Court?"

"Yes, if you wish it," replied Minna, with the utmost simplicity.

"Well, then, go through it again," said Doctor Cornelius, seating himself at the instrument. He made his little pupil repeat it twice, showing her just how it should be rendered so as to give it the proper effect; after which he kissed her with rapture, and, exclaiming to his wife, "I am saved!" took his hat and cane, and hastened to the Grand Master of the Palace, to whom he recounted what had happened. The Grand Master demanded to be allowed to judge for himself of the performance of the little prodigy, and, having done this, was so much delighted that he at once obtained the Landgrave's permission for Minna to make her appearance in the Court theatre, and take part in the performance of the oratorio.





## CHAPTER XXX.

### AN ANGEL'S TOILETTE.



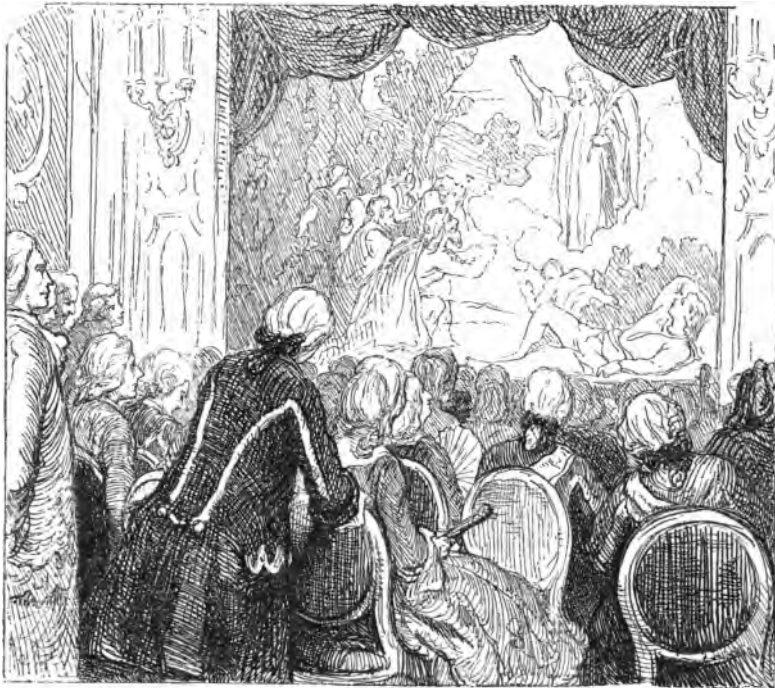
As the oratorio was to be performed on the morrow, there was no time to lose in getting ready Minna's costume. Angels

are, happily, less exacting, in matters of dress, than the daughters of earth: a white robe and a pair of wings are all they want. Wilhelmina and Berta sat up the greater part of the night, making the long white robe: the theatre furnished the wings, and, for the head, a golden circlet surmounted by a star. When Minna was arrayed in this costume, she looked so lovely that Doctor Cornelius declared, if she presented herself thus at the gates of Paradise, Saint Peter would take her for one of the Angels coming home from a journey. In the evening, to the great amazement of the neighbours, a Court carriage stopped at the Chapel-master's door, and conveyed him and his whole family to the Palace. While they were on the way, Doctor Cornelius gave his last instructions to Minna, and asked her, anxiously, if she felt frightened.

“Frightened! why should I?” replied Minna, in her perfect unconsciousness. Doctor Cornelius was both delighted and surprised at this reply; for he, poor man! could not help trembling whenever he thought of the double ordeal he was about to undergo on that memorable evening.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

MINNA MAKES HER FIRST APPEARANCE IN THE COURT  
THEATRE, IN THE ORATORIO OF DOCTOR CORNELIUS.



At last the important moment arrived. The theatre was ablaze with lights, and filled with splendid toilettes; for all the

Court was in full dress. As soon as the Landgrave and his family had taken their seats, Doctor Cornelius, having sent a glance over his musicians, brandished his bow, and the orchestra performed the overture, which was considered to be very fine, and received with flattering plaudits.

The curtain now rose on scenery representing a landscape of Judæa, seen by starlight. A company of shepherds, lying on the ground, were sleeping beside their flocks. The music of this introduction was suggestive of the mysterious stillness of an oriental night. Suddenly a brilliant light bursts upon the scene, and a celestial choir is heard; the shepherds, awaking, express their terror; a cloud opens and discloses a beautiful Angel in a long white tunic, bearing an olive-branch in her hand. The Angel, as we know already, was our little friend Minna; and the whole house broke out into applause at the appearance of the charming vision. Silence, however, was gradually restored, and soon became so complete that you might almost have heard the good Composer's heart beat. As for Wilhelmina, Berta, and Friedrich, they seemed to be petrified as they sat in their box. Minna alone was perfectly calm. She sang the famous solo in a style at once so simple and so noble, and in tones so sweet and touching, that every body was enchanted. The Landgrave himself gave the signal of applause; and the brilliant audience clapped, and cried "Brava!" as though they were all going mad together. The solo was called for a second time, and was given as successfully as at first, raising the enthusiasm of the house almost to frenzy.

The orchestra rose as one man ; the Shepherds and the Angels joined in the ovation ; and the Demons themselves, forgetting their part, shouted as loud as the others in honour of the heavenly messenger who had just proclaimed that their reign was over. Calm was at length restored ; and the oratorio concluded with a magnificent chorus, in which Earth, Heaven, and Hell united their voices for the glory of Doctor Cornelius.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

SUCCESS DOES NOT MAKE MINNA EITHER PROUD OR  
UNGRATEFUL.



WHEN the performance was over, the Chamberlain on duty came for Doctor Cornelius and Minna, to present them to the Landgrave. His Serene Highness complimented his Chapel-

master warmly on his oratorio, and still more warmly on his little pupil, whom he took on his knee and caressed with paternal kindness.

“It is generally the part of mortals to implore the protection of the celestial host,” said the Landgrave, with a smile; “but if a poor earthly Sovereign, like myself, may be so far favoured by Heaven as to be able to do any thing to gratify one of its loveliest Angels, let the Angel deign to utter her commands: I shall be too happy to obey them!”

“Oh, Highness,” replied Minna, in supplicating tones, “grant me to find my father and mother!”

In the midst of the brilliant Court, surrounding the youthful singer with kindness and compliments, the good little heart thought only of the humble cottage in which Carl and Gretchen were sorrowing for their lost darling!

The Landgrave made Minna tell him her history; which she did with a touching simplicity that drew tears from her listeners.

“My dear little Angel,” said the Landgrave, when she had finished her tale, “I promise you that I will find your father and mother. And now,” added his Highness, drawing a diamond ring from his finger, “take this as a keepsake from me.”

All the grand gentlemen, and all the fine Court ladies, kissed the little girl, and each of them made her a present; so that the Chamberlain was obliged to give her a casket to hold this harvest of jewels. In those days great lords and ladies were very generous.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### WHAT MINNA DID WITH HER TREASURES.

MASTER and pupil were impatiently waited for by family and friends, and received, on their return from the scene of their



triumphs, with joyful cries and bravos. Minna hastened to embrace the good Wilhelmina and her dear Berta and Friedrich; and then, having opened her casket, and showed



them the beautiful presents given to her by the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, she begged them to take whatever they liked best. This invitation was opposed by Doctor Cornelius, who said, "No, no; these jewels were given to Minna, and she must keep them."

"Are these things really mine?" demanded Minna.

"Certainly they are yours, my child," replied the Doctor.

"Then I have the right to do what I please with them," returned Minna.

"Quite right!" cried an old Professor of Roman Law, taking a pinch of snuff: "ownership is the right of using and abusing; *utendi et abutendi*."

Minna at once clasped an exquisite pearl necklace round Berta's neck, gave to Friedrich a handsome gold watch, fastened the richest of her bracelets on the wrist of her adoptive mother, and slipped a ring, set with a magnificent sapphire, on the reluctant finger of the good Doctor Cornelius. The supper was charming, for every one was happy and merry; and it was midnight before the guests thought of departing. When, at last, the three children had gone to bed, and the *maestro* found himself alone with the good Wilhelmina, he exclaimed, joyfully,—

"Wife, wife, let us thank God for this happy day!"

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

A COUPLE OF IMPOSTORS PRESENT THEMSELVES TO MINNA,  
WHO SEES AT ONCE THROUGH THE TRICK.



THE Landgrave did not forget his promise, as is too often done by the rulers of the earth. The very next day he gave orders to his Prime Minister to cause it to be published, in the Official

Gazette, and in all the cities, towns, and hamlets of his dominions, that a reward of fifty gold florins would be given to any one who should discover the parents of a little girl named Minna, who had been stolen, three years before, by gipsies. The proclamation contained various other particulars about the child and her parents, inserted for the purpose of facilitating the work of discovery.

Certain dishonest people, wishing to possess themselves wrongfully of the promised reward, tried to palm off upon the Minister a false Carl and a false Gretchen; but the image of her beloved parents was too deeply graven in Minna's heart for it to be possible to make her the dupe of so clumsy a trick; and the pair of impostors were obliged to slink away, amidst the hisses of the crowd, esteeming themselves fortunate that they had not been arrested and thrown into prison, to undergo the punishment of their wicked attempt.



## CHAPTER XXXV.

### A FATHER'S DREAM.



MINNA'S parents little guessed how much trouble was being taken, by the Landgrave's orders, to discover their place of

abode. Their village was an obscure hamlet, far from any large town, with no frequented highway running near it, and inhabited only by a handful of poor peasants, very few of whom knew how to read or write. No newspaper, no traveller, no news, ever reached the secluded spot. Since their beloved child had been stolen from them, they had lived alone with their sorrow, scarcely seeing even their neighbours. Gretchen, whose mind had been almost unsettled by her grief, spent her days in wandering restlessly about the country, as though she hoped to find her little Minna. There is never any peace for the heart that doubts the goodness of God, and refuses to submit to the trouble that He permits to come upon us. Carl, who was truly religious, set a noble example of resignation and patience, and showed himself, in his simple trustfulness, to be a true Christian hero, though he was too humble, and too forgetful of himself, to know it. Whenever the image of his darling came up in his mind, filling his eyes with tears, so that he could not see to set his stitches, he would lay down his work, and go off to the little church, where he would pray with fervour for strength to bear his sorrow, and then go back to his cottage quieted and calm. On one of Minna's birthdays the poor tailor was seized with a fit of grief, even more violent than usual, at the sight of her little empty chair. It seemed to him that his heart was breaking; but he knelt down and prayed one of those prayers that God always hears, because they come from the sincerity of the soul. That night his Guardian Angel sent him a

beautiful and consoling dream, in which he seemed to see his lost daughter, looking more lovely than ever, and heard her say, "Dear father, do not weep any more; for we shall soon be together again!" The joy which this dream caused him was so great that it wakened him; and he told it to Gretchen, who had been lying awake, as usual, too restless to sleep.

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried Gretchen, impatiently: "we shall never see her again. God has cursed us!"

"Nay, wife," replied Carl, earnestly; "do not speak in that way. God has seen fit to send us a heavy trial; but He is always good; and if we pray to Him with faith, He will bring our child back to us!"



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

SHOWS HOW THE BLUNDER OF A POSTILLION IS SOMETIMES  
MORE USEFUL THAN ALL THE EFFORTS OF THE POLICE OF  
A LANDGRAVE.



SEVERAL years had passed; and still, notwithstanding all the efforts made by the Landgrave's orders, nothing had been discovered of Minna's parents.

But Providence seems sometimes purposely to confound the efforts of the powerful, and to bring about, by means the most simple and commonplace, the ends which they had been unable to accomplish.

Minna had just completed her fifteenth year, and the charming child had developed into a tall and beautiful girl. Time, the great consoler, had softened the bitterness of her regret for the loss of her parents; but the remembrance of them was still fondly cherished by her, and gave to her sweet face a pensive expression which, as in certain heads of Leonardo da Vinci, added a new charm to her beauty. Thanks to her admirable organization, thanks, above all, to the intelligent care of Doctor Cornelius, she had attained a high degree of perfection in her favourite art. She knew by heart all the works of the great masters, sang and played on the harpsichord like a Saint Cecilia, and was perfectly at home among the mysteries of the fugue and counterpoint. The excellent education bestowed on her by her adoptive family, which had made her familiar with ancient as well as with modern literature, with history and geography, and had given her some knowledge of astronomy and the other natural sciences, had also ensured for her the moral and religious training without which knowledge remains sterile, and which can only be obtained in the bosom of an enlightened and sincerely Christian home.

At the period to which this story refers Italy was regarded as the classic land of the fine arts, and especially of music.



No musician was thought any thing of unless he had made the tour of Italy, which was considered as being for the artist what the pilgrimage to Mecca is for the Mussulman. The Landgrave, who was determined that nothing should be lacking to the artistic reputation of the young girl whom he had taken under his protection, requested Doctor Cornelius to accompany Minna on a journey through Italy, of which he defrayed the cost with royal generosity. After having slowly wandered through that wonderful 'country, in a state of perpetual enchantment such as only the true artist can feel, Doctor Cornelius and his adopted daughter set out on their return to Germany, passing through the Tyrol, and travelling in a post-chaise, by short stages. One day the postillion lost his way, and in trying to get back into the right road he brought the travellers suddenly out upon the brow of a high hill, from which the eye took in an immense horizon, full of brilliant lights and vaporous shadows. Minna instantly started up with a cry of joy.

"My village! my village! there it is, at the foot of the hill! Oh, how well I remember it! Yonder is our little church; and there, to the right, is my father's cottage! Ludwig," she continued, addressing the postillion, "follow this lane: it will take us into the high-road."

The postillion turned his horses into the rough and narrow path pointed out by Minna; and after a few minutes' jolting among stones and bushes, the chaise was advancing along a highway which, if it did not say much for the skill of the

road-makers of the region, was still a great improvement on the tortuous paths in which the unlucky postillion had been driving since he lost the track of the public road. Minna's heart beat high with joy at the thought that she was on the point of seeing again her good and loving parents; but Doctor Cornelius hardly dared to believe in the reality of a chance so Providential, when Minna espied, a few yards farther on, at the side



of the road, an old woman who was dragging herself painfully along with the aid of a stick, and carrying on her back, bent double by age and infirmity, a bundle of dry wood.

"There's Mother Fritz!" exclaimed Minna, eagerly.

She made the postillion stop the chaise, and called out,—

"Mother Fritz! Mother Fritz!"

The old woman stood still, and looked round in amazement.

"Don't you know me, Mother Fritz?" cried Minna.

"No, indeed, my beautiful young lady!"

"I am Minna! little Minna, who stole the apple out of your garden!"

"Saints help us!" exclaimed Mother Fritz, dropping the faggot in her astonishment.

Minna sprang out of the carriage and embraced the old woman, when a terrible fear shot through her mind. What if her parents were dead? She had not the courage to question Mother Fritz; but the latter seemed to divine her anxiety.

"The good Father Hoffmann, and poor Mother Gretchen, how happy they will be!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands.

"Let us go to them directly!" cried Minna, from whose heart a horrible load seemed to have been rolled away.

She made the old woman get into the chaise with her faggot; she asked her question after question, and shed many tears at learning all that her father and mother had suffered from her loss. It seemed to her, as they neared the village, that the horses crept along like snails, so impatient was she to throw herself into the arms of those dear parents, and to say to them, "It is I, Minna, your little daughter, who has never ceased to

love you!" But Doctor Cornelius succeeded in showing her that a great joy can kill as surely as a great sorrow; that her too sudden appearance might be dangerous, or even fatal, to her parents; and that it would be necessary to prepare them



gradually for an event so unexpected. When the chaise reached the tailor's cottage, Doctor Cornelius and Mother Fritz alighted, leaving Minna in the vehicle, where it had been settled that she should remain until they came to bring her into the house. But she had not the patience to wait. Scarcely had the others entered the cottage, when she got out of the carriage and hastened along a narrow path that led through the garden to the back of the cottage. There she was able to peep in through a half-opened door; and her tears fell fast as she saw the changes wrought in the faces of her father and mother by years and grief.

“Ah, Sir!” Hoffmann was just saying to Doctor Cornelius, “God has tried us sorely; but no doubt He has reasons for it that we do not yet understand; and we can only submit to His will.”



“That is true,” replied Doctor Cornelius; “but you must keep up your courage, and hope for the best. You know the proverb, ‘It is a long lane that has no turning.’ You may perhaps see your daughter sooner than you think.”

“God grant it, Sir!” returned the tailor. “If you only knew what a sweet little creature she was! Every body loved her! The thought of her is at once the delight and the sorrow of my life. There was a little song that she was never tired of hearing. It was about a poor little shepherd-boy

who has nothing in the world to love or care for but a kid, a pretty white kid; and how he loses her, and of all the grief he is in about her."

And then the poor tailor began to sing, in a voice broken by emotion,—

"At length, alas! she stray'd away;—  
Weeping, he sought her, every day,—  
His milk-white Kid, his pretty pet,  
Joliette;—  
Then back, at dusk, to his hut would creep,  
And lie and sob himself to sleep!"

Carl had stopped singing, for his tears were choking him, when suddenly a clear, sweet, ringing voice, that seemed to vibrate with some profound feeling, took up the simple strain thus interrupted:—

"Nay, little Shepherd, do not cry!  
She's *sure* to come home again, by and by,—  
Your milk-white Kid, your pretty pet,  
Joliette;—  
And when you see the runaway,  
Again you'll frolic, race, and play!"

The tailor and his wife were listening, breathless, to this voice, in a state of agitation difficult to describe, when the door which communicated with the garden at the back of the cottage was pushed open, and Minna threw herself into Gretchen's arms, crying,—

"Mother! mother!"

Gretchen stared at her wildly for a few moments; then, as though the features of the young stranger recalled those of her lost child, she uttered a piercing cry, and clasped Minna to her bosom in a torrent of weeping.



The poor mother, through all those weary years, had not been able to shed a single tear !

As for Carl, he had fallen on his knees, offering up his thanks to God. Minna, filled with respect and tenderness, on seeing him in this humble posture, knelt down before him.

“My dear father!” she exclaimed, her whole soul thrown into her voice.

Carl raised her up, and held her for some time pressed to his heart in speechless ecstasy. The deepest joy is silent. The spirit, at such moments, seems to throw off its fetters of flesh, and to rise into a region of celestial beatitude, too high and too pure for words.

When these first effusions of tenderness were over, Minna presented Doctor Cornelius to her parents, saying,—

“This is the dear, kind friend who saved me from want and misery, my generous benefactor, my second father!”

Carl and Gretchen took the good Composer’s hand in theirs, covering them with grateful tears.





## CHAPTER XXXVII.

SHOWS HOW MINNA WAS WELCOMED BACK BY HER OLD FRIENDS,  
AND WHAT BECAME OF HER PARENTS.

MOTHER FRITZ had lost no time in spreading through the village the wonderful news of Minna's return. Old and young all left their work to go and see the tailor's lost child; but all stood stock still in mute amazement on finding, instead of the little girl they remembered so well, a tall and beautiful young lady whom they knew nothing about. Minna, however, remembered them all; she addressed them by their names, and had a pleasant and kindly word for each. The old Curate had not been the last to reach the cottage, and shared heartily in the general joy.

"My friends," said he, "the hand of God is plainly visible in all that has happened! Let us go at once to the church, and offer Him our thanksgiving."

The Curate's proposition, being promptly responded to by all the villagers, gave Doctor Cornelius the opportunity of contriving a charming surprise for the congregation, by playing on the organ while Minna sang the famous Christmas solo. The worthy peasants who had never in their lives heard such

beautiful music, almost fancied themselves in Paradise. After the music, the old Curate addressed to his parishioners a short discourse about Providence, and how GOD always watches over His children, and leads them on by mysterious paths to the appointed end. On leaving the church the good Curate took Doctor Cornelius and all the Hoffmann family to the Presbytery, and kept them to dinner. During the dessert Minna narrated her history, which was frequently interrupted by the tears of the listeners.

It had been decided that Carl and Gretchen should accompany Doctor Cornelius and Minna to Darmstadt, and accordingly on the following morning the happy party set out together. Before starting, Minna gave all the money she had to the Curate to be distributed among the poor of the parish, except two gold florins which she forced Mother Fritz to accept, assuring her, with a smile, that they were to pay for the apple she had stolen from her garden. The whole village turned out to witness the departure of the travellers, bidding them a hearty farewell, and calling down upon them the blessing of Heaven.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HOW MINNA BECAME POSSESSED OF A LARGE SUM OF MONEY,  
AND HOW CARL FOUND HIMSELF AT THE SUMMIT OF HIS  
WISHES.

A FORTNIGHT after the occurrence of the events related in the last chapter, the two families were reunited in Darmstadt. The Landgrave sent for Carl and Gretchen, and received them with the greatest kindness and affability; and having talked with them for a few minutes, he placed a purse containing fifty gold florins in Minna's hand.

"I promised this sum to any one who should succeed in discovering your parents," said the Landgrave; "these fifty florins are therefore most certainly yours."

"It is the Divine Providence, Highness, that has worked this miracle," replied Minna: "these fifty florins belong to the poor."

"God forbid that I should defraud them of this sum, my dear child," returned the Landgrave; "but, passing through your hands, it will do twice as much good. Hoffmann," he continued, turning towards the tailor, who was not a little intimidated at finding himself in the presence of so great a

personage, "one of my park-rangers is just dead; I give you his place."

"Oh, Highness, how good you are!" exclaimed Minna, kissing the Landgrave's hand with respectful affection.

"My child," returned the Landgrave, "we Sovereigns are obliged to be rather kinder than other people, in order that the world may forgive us our greatness."

A few days afterwards Hoffmann, Gretchen, and Minna were settled in a pretty lodge which the Landgrave had caused to be repaired for them, and furnished with elegant simplicity. Carl looked upon himself as the happiest of fathers and of tailors. The dream of his life was fulfilled; for his new position enabled him to work only for the poor. As for Gretchen, who was now almost as grand as a burgher's lady, she felt an occasional stirring of her old pride; but the remembrance of past sorrow never failed to bring her speedily back to a more reasonable state of mind.



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

HOW MINNA'S MOST FERVENT PRAYER IS GRANTED.

AMIDST the happiness of her present life, Minna often thought of those terrible companions of her childhood, the



gipsies, and especially of her devoted friend and protector, Petrolino.

The little cloak that the kind-hearted fellow had had made for

her out of his famous senatorial mantle was hung up in her room amongst the wreaths of laurel and other glorious trophies that recorded the young artist's triumphs. She could never see that little cloak without emotion; and whenever her eyes fell on it she would say to herself,—

“Poor Petrolino, what has become of you? And will it not please God to enable me, some day or other, to show you how gratefully I remember your kindness?”

The thought of Petrolino still called up in Minna's mind a feeling akin to remorse; so much did she fear lest he should have thought her ungrateful. Morning and evening, when she said her prayers, and invoked the blessing of Heaven on her parents and benefactors, she never forgot to pray also for the poor mandoline-player. And at last her prayer was answered.

One day when Minna made her usual visit to the hospital, carrying to the poor sick people there the offering of her alms and her consoling words, she espied, hanging on the wall behind one of the beds, an old stringless mandoline, and a worn, discoloured cloak, covered with stains and mud, but which, in certain places that had suffered less than the rest of the garment from the ravages of time, still preserved enough of its original colour to show that it had once been of a magnificent scarlet. It was evidently the mantle that had been borrowed by Rabba, twenty years before, of the Venetian Senator; but how sadly was it fallen from its ancient splendour! Minna uttered a cry of surprise, and bent eagerly over the sick man

in the narrow hospital-bed above which these relics were suspended. Alas! like the famous mantle, the occupant of the couch was so changed that it was difficult to recognize him. He looked like a spectre, a phantom, the mere shadow of his former self!

"Petrolino!" said Minna, in a low voice tremulous with emotion.

On hearing this name, the sick man raised himself on his elbow; and fixing his eyes, bright with the fire of fever, on the young girl beside him, he suddenly exclaimed,—

"The Biondina!"

"Yes, it is I, the Biondina; yes, it is I, my poor Petrolino!"

"St. Mark and the Virgin be thanked!" said Petrolino, clasping his hands; for since he had been ill his thoughts had gone back to the faith of his infancy, as the child who has wandered out of its road, by night, into the middle of a wood, bethinks it of its parents, and calls on them for help.

"I have seen my Biondina again!" cried Petrolino, clasping his hands in a sort of wondering rapture: "now I can die happy!"

"Don't talk in that way, Petrolino!" said Minna, in a tone of gentle reproof.

"Why not? Is it not the best thing for a poor wretch like me to do?" returned the sick man, with something like a gleam of his former gaiety.

"Have confidence in GOD, Petrolino!" said Minna: "He can give you back your health."

"Health!" sighed Petrolino, shaking his head: "of what use would health be to me? What's the good of nuts when one has lost one's teeth? as old Rabba used to say."

"Petrolino," said Minna, in a sweet, grave voice, full of affectionate earnestness, "you took pity on the poor little friendless child. When she lay shivering, at night, on the cold ground, you wrapped her in your mantle; when she was tired, you carried her in your arms; you protected her against the wolves, and against those who were still more cruel than wolves. The little child is now a woman; but through all these years of absence she has preserved at the bottom of her heart the remembrance of your kindness, of your generous goodness; and she now says to you, Friend Petrolino, the Biondina is rich, and therefore you are rich; the Biondina is happy, and she is determined you shall be happy also!"

The tender gratitude that Minna felt for her old friend gave to her voice, naturally melodious, an indescribable charm. Petrolino listened in a sort of ecstasy, and fancied he must be dreaming.

"The Biondina is dead," he murmured, "and it is her dear spirit that has come to visit me!"

"No, no, it is the Biondina herself, in flesh and blood!" said Minna, with a smile. "You must pluck up your courage, my poor Petrolino: in a few days you will be able to quit this gloomy hospital!"

"Are you going already?" cried Petrolino, uneasy at seeing that Minna was beginning to move away.



“ Yes ; but I am going to set to work for you ; and I shall come and see you every day.”

This promise seemed to calm the sick man’s alarm. He took Minna’s hand and raised it to his lips ; while a tear of gratitude stole down his cheek, flushed with fever.

Minna recommended her old friend to the especial care of the physician of the hospital, left some money with the nurse for his use, and hastened home to acquaint her parents and friends with the happy discovery she had made so unexpectedly.



## CHAPTER XL.

HOW CARL FOUND IN A HOSPITAL THE SOLUTION OF A PROBLEM  
THAT HE HAD MUCH AT HEART.



CARL accompanied Minna, next day, in her visit to the hospital.  
He longed to see the kind protector of his dear little daughter,

and to express to him all his gratitude. Petrolino was no longer the miserable spectre of the day before. The fever had left him, which proves that Joy and Hope are the very best doctors in the world. He was awaiting Minna's return with the greatest impatience, and seemed as happy as a child on seeing her arrive with her father. While Petrolino and Minna were talking, like a couple of old friends, of the time when they were together, Carl's mind was occupied with one single idea; and he kept saying to himself, "How can I prove my thankfulness to this good fellow?" He was anxiously turning over this problem in his head, when his eyes chanced to light on the poor gipsy's ragged garments, which looked so much out of sorts that, if there had been in existence a hospital for old clothes they could fairly have claimed the right to be taken in, even without a ticket. A ray of satisfaction lighted up the face of the worthy tailor. He had found what he was seeking!

The conversation of the two friends had been going on, meantime, without flagging; for they had to tell one another of all that had happened to them both since their separation. Petrolino listened with the liveliest interest to the recital of Minna's history and successes, and exclaimed, with enthusiasm, when she had finished her story,—

"Old Zara was not mistaken! You have a star!"

"And now it is your turn, Petrolino!" said Minna, settling herself to listen.

"From the time you left us," began Petrolino, "every thing went wrong. Our ill-luck commenced with old Rabba. He

died suddenly, after eating too hearty a supper. He was too fond of roast goose, and that killed him. Makitou was made Chief in his place, against the warnings of old Zara, who foretold all sorts of misfortunes for us if he were chosen. She was right. Troubles came upon us thick as hail. While Rabba lived, Makitou had not ventured to give himself up too completely to his passion for robbery and violence; but when he became master, he gave the reins to his evil instincts and threw off all restraint. Many a blow did I get for having the courage to tell him the truth. He was a little afraid of me, and never ordered me to do any thing dishonest; for he knew that I should have disobeyed him. One night I was suddenly awakened by the cries of the rest of the troop, and I saw Makitou, who had been away for some hours, coming back with a casket that he was carrying under his cloak. There was blood on his hands! He cried out, in a hoarse, excited voice, "Up, and off with you, in double-quick time, if you care for your ears!" But the mounted constables were after us. We were all taken, handcuffed, and thrown into prison. Makitou was condemned to death, and hung. Old Zara had often told him it would come to that. As there was no charge against me, I was let out of prison, after having been shut up for six months. I left the jail with a mandoline whose strings had forsaken it, an empty purse, and a stomach just as empty; having lost friends, comrades, gaiety, health, and all that makes life bearable. Driven away, every where, as a vagabond, I dragged myself

along till I came to this town, and fainted away as I reached the door of the hospital. I had not eaten a mouthful for three days!"

"Poor Petrolino!" exclaimed Minna, greatly moved by this recital.

"The rest, my little Biondina, you know already," said Petrolino.



## CHAPTER XLI.

FATHER HOFFMANN CHANGES A GIPSY INTO A RESPECTABLE  
CITIZEN.

THANKS to his robust constitution, to the nourishing broth and good wine of which his poor stomach stood much more in need



than of drugs and potions, and, above all, to the visits of his dear Biondina, Petrolino was soon on his legs again. On the morning of the day appointed for his leaving the hospital, Carl

arrived there very early, with a large bundle under his arm. He found Petrolino already awake, and contemplating, with a piteous expression of countenance, his rubbishing clothes.

"I shall never have the courage to show myself to the Biondina and her friends in such rag-tag as this!" the poor fellow was saying ruefully to himself.

The society of Minna and of Doctor Cornelius and his family had wrought a happy change in Petrolino's ideas. He now blushed for his old trade of gipsying, and was already longing for a calmer and more honourable mode of life. Carl surprised him while absorbed in these reflections. He guessed the nature of his thoughts, opened his big bundle without saying a word, and took out of it a small stock of linen and a complete suit of clothes, which he silently spread out upon the bed. Petrolino dared not believe his eyes.

"Father Hoffmann," he ventured to say, at length, in a tremulous voice, "are these fine clothes really for me?"

"I rather think they are!" replied the tailor, with a kindly smile.

Petrolino examined each article of this superb costume with childlike delight; presently his eyes filled with tears, and pressing Carl's hand, he uttered just two words:—

"Thank you!"

But the tone in which those words were spoken paid the good tailor a hundred times over for his handsome gift.

When Minna and Gretchen, accompanied by Doctor Corne-

lius, entered the hospital ward, Petrolino was waiting for them, arrayed in his new habiliments.

"My dear Petrolino, you are perfectly magnificent!" cried Doctor Cornelius, examining him from top to toe.

"It is thanks to our friend Carl!" replied Petrolino.

"I see how it is that you have been invisible for a week past, my dear father!" said Minna, kissing him. "How good you are!"

"Your outfit is a masterpiece, my excellent Carl; and in truth you have not spared the cloth!" said Doctor Cornelius, glancing at Petrolino, who seemed to have room enough in his clothes to swim about in them.

"If I have made the suit rather loose, Herr Doctor, it was done on purpose," replied Carl, with a knowing smile: "our friend Petrolino will soon be growing fat, thanks to Gretchen's good cookery, and to yours also, Herr Doctor!"

"I did not think of that, Father Carl! and I humbly beg pardon for my stupidity in not divining your motive in making them so large," rejoined Doctor Cornelius, laughing.

On quitting the hospital, Petrolino took his old cloak and his mandoline away with him.

"They have stuck to me in my troubles," said he, with a smile: "one must not be ungrateful to old friends."



## CONCLUSION.



PETROLINO proved himself worthy of the affectionate interest taken in him by Minna and her friends. He soon got rid of

all traces of the vagabond life he had led with the gipsies, and bore to his beloved Biondina, to the last day of his life, the instinctive, unchanging, absolute devotion that a good-hearted dog bears to his master.

As for Minna, she became the greatest singer in all Germany ; but fame and riches left her modest and charitable ; and while her name was hailed from one end of Europe to the other by the enthusiastic acclamations of admiring crowds, it was blessed in secret by the poor and the unfortunate, for whom, until she died, she was an Angel of Consolation.



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